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Class No.....080.....

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SPEECHES  
BY  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
SIR SAMUEL HOARE  
BART., P.C., G.C.S.I., G.B.E., C.M.G., M.P.  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA

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1. SPEECH DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE 2ND DECEMBER, 1931, ON THE MOTION TO APPROVE HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT'S POLICY AS SET OUT IN THE COMMAND PAPER ISSUED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE INDIAN ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE.

A new Parliament unlike all its predecessors has been gathered together. The unprecedented size of the majority is the outward expression of the national demand for action. Just as in some countries that are used to dictatorships the demand for action has shown itself in Fascism and Bolshevism, so here with our Parliamentary traditions it has taken the form of a great Parliamentary majority. To-day this House of Commons is probably the most omnipotent political body anywhere in the world. May I ask it resolutely, calmly, and dispassionately to consider one of the gravest questions with which we shall be faced during the years of our existence? A decision upon Indian policy cannot be avoided. Will it or will it not succeed in building a new bridge between England and India in friendly partnership and mutual understanding? It has often been said that the House of Commons takes little interest in Indian affairs. I hope that that charge will not be justified against this House of Commons. Certainly, if to-day's Debate is significant of the future, I think that we may say that we have among us many new Members whose contributions to our Indian Debates should be of great service.

To-day we have had three interesting maiden speeches from hon. Members who spoke with first-hand knowledge of Indian problems; the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Upton (Mr. Chotzner), the speech of the hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Kirkpatrick), and the speech of the hon. Member for Mile End (Dr. O'Donovan). Then there was the speech of my hon. Friend the junior Member for the English Universities (Sir R. Craddock). It was not his maiden speech, and therefore I cannot congratulate him upon making a maiden speech, for I had that pleasure only a few days ago. It was a very informative speech. Indeed it was almost omniscient. I was very glad of that. It is something to have in this House someone who knows all about India when, as he told us just now, that the Secretary of State and the India Office know nothing about it at all! Perhaps he will pardon me for saying

that, while I listened with great interest to his speech, I did somewhat regret, I will not say the attack, but the criticism which he made against the Viceroy's advisers. Be that as it may, it is a subject for congratulation that we have among us so many new Members who are ready to take so useful a part in our Indian Debates. Let that be symptomatic of a further interest. Let hon. Members, whatever be their opinions, follow this Indian question closely and constantly, and, if they think fit to criticise the action and policy of the Government—these questions are much too grave for platitudes, reticences and generalities—certainly as long as I have the honour to hold the office I hold to-day, not only shall I not resent reasonable criticism, but I shall welcome it, particularly when it comes from hon. Members who, owing to long association with India, have a perfect right to speak from their own knowledge and give the House of Commons the advice which is founded upon their experience.

Of all controversies, the most difficult controversies are those in which both sides are right. When all the right is on one side and all the wrong on the other, it is very easy to come to a simple verdict. When, however, the balance is evenly held and there is a great deal to be said on both sides, the decision, the course of action, is by no means so easy to take. Such a controversy is the Indian controversy.

On the one hand, there is the long partnership, spreading over more than 150 years, between Great Britain and India—a splendid record, a record as splendid as can be found in any chapter of history. We have given to India a unity that it never possessed before. We have given to India peace and justice. We have driven away the spectre of famine, and we have provided opportunities of advance that they would not otherwise have had for the teeming millions of India's population. From the day of small things, when our only officials were revenue collectors, when our only interest was trade, when Warren Hastings was an assistant warehouse clerk and Stamford Raffles was earning a few shillings at a desk of the East India Company, our partnership has developed to such an extent that it now enters almost inextricably into every branch of the life of British India. Such associations, the result of nearly two centuries of splendid endeavour, cannot be destroyed. Such a partnership, of the utmost value, as I believe, as much to India as to ourselves, must not be dissolved. That is the first factor in the situation.

I come to the second factor. It is of a different character. It is not associated in its origin with the British connection at all. It is an integral part of that great wave of nationalism which, particularly in recent years, has swept over the world from one end to the other. It is part of the same movement that we have seen in Europe, in such countries as Poland and Czechoslovakia. It is part of the same movement that we have seen in Asia, in Turkey, in Iraq, in Arabia. We should be the last people in the world to condemn it. Through almost all our history we have encouraged national movements. In the case of India it is due more to us than to any other cause that there is the national unity that we now see there. Here then, in a sentence, is the core of the whole problem. We have to reconcile the obligations of this long British partnership with India with the legitimate aspirations of Indians to take a greater part in their own government. That is the problem which faces us, that, in a sentence, is the problem we are discussing to-day.

I have now been interesting myself in Indian questions, in office and out of office, continuously for more than a year, and, if I may with all deference give the House a piece of advice founded upon my own experience, I would say to hon. Members that, in trying to make this reconciliation between these two controlling factors in the Indian problem, they should follow the advice so wisely given by the Prime Minister at the Round Table Conference yesterday, and in this House of Commons this afternoon, and keep clear of phrases and generalities. Phrases and generalities, it seems to me, have done more harm in our attempts to find a reconciliation between the two views, the British and the Indian view, than almost anything else, and, so far as I am concerned, I have always tried to avoid the use of high-sounding phrases and have tried to address myself constantly and continuously to the actual facts. A year ago we were wrangling about the phrase "Dominion Status." I hope that we shall not get into a similar wrangle about the phrase "Responsibility at the Centre." Responsibility at the centre to some people appears to be one of the Ten Commandments that you must always observe, and to others it appears the unforgivable sin that you must never commit. In point of fact, it is a very difficult form of Government which we first introduced here, and which we have subsequently seen introduced into other parts of the world.

So far as India is concerned, all three parties are equally committed to accepting the fact that responsible government

is the ultimate objective to which all of us are working. It is therefore not a question of whether India is to have responsible government or not, because we are agreed that at some time in the future it will have responsible government; the question to which I invite the attention of the House is not whether India is to have responsible government or not, but when it is to have responsible government and in what conditions. The Prime Minister's statement and the deliberations of the Round Table Conference throw much light upon the answer that we can at present give to that question.

Let me say, in passing, that so far as the Round Table Conference is concerned I do not admit the justice of many of the criticisms that have been made against it during the course of this Debate. I believe that, though it may have failed so far in finding agreement upon many fundamental questions and a great many details, yet it has played a useful part, and the Indian controversy will never be quite the same again. Speaking for myself, I can honestly say that it has been a great opportunity and a great privilege to me to sit there day after day and week after week with a number of prominent Indian representatives, and to exchange views with them. Very often it was a difficult task. The representative of the Government was in a peculiarly difficult position, and very often my Indian colleagues may have thought me hypercritical, and it may be unnecessarily reserved, but I can assure them and I can assure the House that during those long sessions I learned a great deal, and I believe they learned something too. I am sure that controversy, if controversy there be in the future, is never going to be as bitter as in the past, as a result of the associations and the friendships we have made during these long weeks.

I have said that by the way, and I must come back to the point at which I left my argument, namely, the present position of the Government, and, I believe, of the great majority of hon. Members in this House, towards an advance to responsible government. The Prime Minister's White Paper clearly sets out the position of the Government. We state clearly and categorically in that document that we accept what the Prime Minister said on behalf of the last Government last January. We are prepared to make an advance to responsible government both at the Centre and in the Provinces upon certain definite and specified conditions. There are two conditions in particular, and even though most hon. Members know all about them I must, for the sake of clearness, repeat them at this part of my speech.

The first condition is that the responsible government at the Centre must be an All-India government, representing both British India and the Indian States. The second condition is that certain obligations which have resulted from our long association with India must be safeguarded, and must be safeguarded, as I think I shall show later, just as much in the interests of India as of ourselves

The whole basis of our discussions during the last 12 months has been that the constitution that we are considering must be an all-India constitution. As the world grows more closely knit together, as time and distance are eliminated, so it becomes quite impossible in a sub-continent like India for one section of it to be isolated from the other sections, and I am quite sure myself that whether it be in the interests of the Princes and the Indian States, or whether it be in the interests of British India, the future of India must be the future of India as a whole upon an all-India federal basis.

It is the fashion to say that an All-India Federation has, during the last few weeks, drifted away to a very distant and very vague background. Let me say categorically that that is not the case. Necessarily, differences have emerged. What else could we expect when dealing with 600 Indian States varying in every detail of their governments, varying from the great State of Hyderabad, as big as some of the great Powers of Europe, to a small State, it may be of a few acres, with a revenue of a few rupees. Of course there must be differences to be adjusted when one is dealing with a body of individuals and States whose interests and conditions are so very varied. None the less, I can tell the House that the idea of All-India Federation definitely still holds the field. Only at the last session of the Round Table Conference the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, His Highness the Nawab of Bhopal, speaking for the Chamber of Princes, and Sir Akbar Hydari speaking for Hyderabad, the greatest of the Indian States, said that not only was it an ultimate ideal, but it was a practical factor in the problem, and that they were going back to India to surmount those differences and to make it possible for the Indian States and Princes to take their part in the All-India Federation. So much for the first of the two conditions on which we are prepared to advance towards responsible government.

Let me now come to the second condition, the safeguarding of the obligations that have grown up during the long years of our association with India—obligations, let me say again, that



must be satisfied just as much in the interests of India as of ourselves. I have more than once in this House stated those obligations I venture to state them once again. I shall state them shortly and it may be rather abruptly. I hope that none of our Indian friends will think, upon that account, that I wish to be peremptory about the details or about the machinery for ensuring them. If I state them shortly, it is because I have not an unlimited time during which I can address the House.

First of all, until India is in a position to defend herself, our command of the Army must be clear and undisputed and our control of foreign affairs must be reserved. Secondly, our relations with the Princes must be retained by the Crown. Financial stability must be effectively safeguarded, and so ultimately must be internal security. Minorities must be protected. There must be no unfair economic or commercial discrimination against the British trader, and the rights of Services recruited by the Secretary of State must be safeguarded.

I said just now that those were obligations which must be protected just as much in the interests of India as of ourselves. Let me tell the House why I think that is so. I will take the case of the Army. Surely until India can defend herself, it is to the advantage of India to be protected from the ravages of invasion, to which, before the British occupation, she was so often subjected. It is therefore immensely to the advantage of India, if India is to develop and if India's new constitution is to mature, to have the protection of the British Army. Then again, with finance, surely it is to the advantage of India, particularly in this difficult period—and any period will be difficult when you are embarking on constitutional changes—to have behind it the steady support of British credit. Nothing would do India greater harm than to have its credit shaken. Nothing would do India greater harm, particularly in these difficult days of constitutional changes, than to shake the confidence of British traders to whom India owes so much in the past and to whom, I believe, India will owe so much in the future for the capital it so greatly needs for its own development.

I know I have said enough in the two examples that I have taken to show that when we speak of safeguards we are not creating obstacles for the purpose of blocking India's constitutional development. We are thinking much more of the protection that is urgently needed for India no less than ourselves. These safeguards are not shackles upon India's future; they are rather stays, without which the new Indian

Constitution will lack the sure and safe stability that it will so much need.

If these obligations can be satisfied, if, on the one hand, we can set up an All-India Federation, and if, on the other hand, we can ensure these necessary reservations, I am prepared to make the advance, both in the Centre and in the Provinces, that is foreshadowed in the Government White Paper. Indeed, I go so far as to say that I believe that a Government set up under such conditions as I have mentioned might very well be a stronger Government than the Government that we have got in India at the present time.

I do not make the least criticism against any official high or low in the Government of India. I think that they are carrying out their difficult task with magnificent efficiency, but what does strike me, coming fresh to the India Office in the course of the last few weeks, is that the Government of India as it is at present constituted is vulnerable in two directions. First, it appears to me to be over-centralised. In the old days, when the problem of Government was a simple one, and the needs of the governed were very few, it was possible to rule a great continent with a highly centralised machine. I suggest for the consideration of hon. Members that they should give their attention to this side of the problem and ask themselves whether, now that the problem of government has become so immensely complicated, the time has not arrived when there ought not to be some kind of decentralisation. That is the reason why I, and I think the great majority of Members in the House, have always been anxious to see this decentralisation carried out in the way of Provincial autonomy.

There is another consideration, and if hon. Members will take it into account, they will appreciate its significance. The Government of India to-day is a Government composed of official and nominated non-official members. Almost every politician in the country, to whatever party he belongs, is in the happy position of being in totally irresponsible opposition. That leaves the Government in a very vulnerable position. I look forward to the time when the Government will no longer be in so vulnerable a position, and when, with the ebb and flow of politics, the opposition might be subjected to that salutary check, the hope or risk of being in office itself. I am only suggesting these two lines of thought; I do not wish to dogmatise upon them. What I wish is that hon. Members, in approaching this problem, should give them their most careful attention.

If my survey of the situation is correct, I would venture to say that our objective should be the following First an All-India executive and legislature, and I hope that neither that executive nor that legislature will be too big. They should both be designed for the exclusive purpose of carrying out certain clearly marked Federal duties. Secondly, autonomous Provinces, in which each Province shall be given the greatest possible freedom for its individual development; and, as the basis of the whole structure, safeguards without which British and Indian safety and credit cannot continue. That should be our objective. That is the objective of the Government White Paper. That is the Government envisaged in the White Paper.

Here let me turn aside for a moment and say to my right hon. Friend the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill) that I do not quite understand the bearing of his Amendment upon the statement as I understand it. No doubt to-morrow he will elaborate his views when he comes to address the House. Let me only say to him to-night that, knowing the views that he has so brilliantly and so frequently expressed in this House and in the last House, I am a little bit nervous as to whether we and he mean the same thing. One of my great causes of regret during the last few months is that he and I have not always seen alike upon Indian questions, and I would like to be quite clear, before we end the Debate, whether he and I understand the statement and his Amendment in the same way. I do not want to press him now, but let me suggest to him the kind of doubts that are in my mind at any rate. If his Amendment is intended to be a derogation or a diminution of the Government statement, then quite obviously we could not accept it. If it is not intended to be a derogation of the Government statement, then I do not quite understand what it does mean. For instance, there is the passage about the Statute of Westminster. I really do not know what he means by that. The Statute of Westminster has no more to do with the statement of Government policy than the man in the moon. Secondly, there is his point about commercial discrimination. I have said quite clearly that we insist, as one of the safeguards that must be made, that there shall be no unfair discrimination against the British trader. Perhaps to-morrow he will let us into his confidence and tell us whether there is more in his mind than that. Thirdly—what is the third point? Thirdly, there is the point about law and order. What we mean is not that the British Government or the Government of India should intervene in the day to day details of Indian

administration. If we meant that it would be a mere farce to talk about any transfer of responsibility at all, either at the Centre or in the Provinces. What we mean is that in extreme cases there must be an ultimate power somewhere, and that ultimate power would reside in the Provincial Governors and the Viceroy. That is what we mean, and perhaps to-morrow he will tell us whether he and we mean the same thing. I very much hope we do.

Now, having stated as well as I could the objective of the Government policy, let me, in conclusion, suggest to the House the way in which I think we should approach it. I have noticed in the course of the Debate that there has been a good deal of suspicion in the minds of many hon. Members lest this process of procedure by conference should side-track this House and Parliament as a whole. Let me say clearly and definitely that there is not the least intention in the minds of any member of the Government of side-tracking this House in any way or in any direction. This House must have the final say. This House is a sovereign Parliament, and any Bill that passes on to the Statute Book must stand the fire, at every stage, of discussion both in this House and in the other. Let, therefore, no hon. Member think that he or this House are being pushed out of the picture, and that one of these days we are going to wake up to see some document signed, sealed and delivered behind our backs that we have got to accept at a moment's notice.

Having said that let me, however, add that I think hon. Members, in their own interests, would be wise not to discourage this method of consultation and conference. I would suggest to them that if we are discussing and legislating upon Indian constitutional questions, it is much better that when we come to our Debates we should have for our consideration the views of representative Indians. I think it would help us a great deal, particularly if we had the agreed views of representative Indian opinion. Moreover, in proceeding by this method of conference and consultation we are not adopting any method peculiar to India or Indian affairs. The method of procedure by conference is a method that seems to me to be adopted in dealing with almost every big national and international question at the present time. When the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs goes to Geneva and discusses the Manchurian question or Disarmament, this House is not abdicating its powers. When, again, in a few months' time the Imperial Conference meets to discuss the vital question of the

Empire's economic future, we, here in this House, are not divesting ourselves of any of the powers of a sovereign Parliament. I would, therefore, venture to suggest to hon. Members that they would do well not to discourage, but rather to encourage, this method of procedure, always remembering, as I have said more than once in my speech to-night, the final word must rest with them.

As to the committees—and I have been asked a question or two about the committees that are going to report—there again the House is in no way losing its ultimate control. These committees are committees with a definite term of reference to undertake certain inquiries that would have been quite necessary if there had been no Round Table Conference at all. For instance, we would anyhow have had to have a committee about the franchise. That would have emerged directly out of the report of the Indian Statutory Commission. Let me say this about the franchise, as I understand certain anxieties were created earlier in the Debate. Definite instructions will have to be given to the Franchise Committee as to how they are to work. The Prime Minister, when he spoke of the *status quo* in electoral matters, said inferentially that obviously such arrangements as the system of separate electorates, where it at present exists, could not be altered. I say that to show that the Franchise Committee will have to have some definite instructions. So also with the other inquiries. Two of the other inquiries connected with the relations of the Indian States with British India—particularly in matters of finance—those committees are absolutely essential not only to the Round Table Conference, but even more to this House if we are to come to an intelligent decision when at some time in the future we discuss the question of changes in the Indian Constitution. I hope that I have now said enough to reassure the House, and to enforce the final appeal which I venture to make to them.

To-night, I am asking the House of Commons to throw the whole weight of their unprecedented authority behind this attempt to reconcile the British and the Indian point of view, and I am asking hon. Members to keep constantly in mind the factors which I have emphasised in this speech, and to help us in finding reconciliation between Indian aspirations and Imperial needs, between two points of view, both of which are right, and between two great civilisations, each of which, though it may differ from the other, can claim an ancient existence, a splendid history, and a brilliant future.

2. SPEECH DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS  
ON THE 29TH FEBRUARY, 1932, ON THE MOTION IN  
COMMITTEE TO APPROVE THE INDIA OFFICE VOTE  
ON ACCOUNT FOR 1932.

*(Extracts regarding measures taken to counteract the Civil Disobedience Movement and to deal with the Terrorist Movement in Bengal, etc.)*

When last I addressed the House upon Indian affairs it was at the moment when the second Round Table Conference came to an end. The delegates had parted on the whole in an atmosphere of good will. Only the representative of Congress stood apart, and even he sometimes seemed to dislike the discordant note that he was striking. It may, therefore, be said that at the beginning of December, when last we had an Indian Debate, there was a general atmosphere of good will and there was a general desire to advance along the road of co-operation. If I had been asked then to make a forecast of coming events, I think I should have said that the forecast was changeable, but that it was not immediately stormy. Then, within the space of almost a few days, the storm burst, the reverberations of which we are still feeling. Whatever may have been Mr. Gandhi's personal inclinations, the fact remains indisputable that, in the second half of December, the leaders of the Congress organisation were determined to renew war with the Government of India. If any hon. Member will study the Blue Book that I have circulated, he will see instance after instance showing in an indisputable manner that a war mentality had possessed the leaders of Congress.

The Blue Book shows in detail how the Red Shirt movement had been stimulated by Congress in the North-West Frontier Province and how, in that very inflammable area, a critical situation had arisen which threatened the very basis of Government. The Blue Book again shows how, in the United Provinces, Congress stimulated a revolutionary movement which looked like leading to an agrarian revolution. There is also evidence in plenty—if I had the time I could give it in detail—that in the Province of Bengal the leaders of Congress, and particularly the left leaders of Congress, were in close contact with the terrorist movement. Look where you may, from the north of India to the south, there was overwhelming

evidence that Congress was bent upon renewing the war against the British Government. Ever since the Irwin-Gandhi agreement, there had been signs that many prominent Indians in the Congress organisation were using the settlement not as a period of peace but simply as a period of temporary truce during which they were preparing for a renewal of war and taking every opportunity to magnify their own organisation at the expense of the established Government, and of setting up a parallel and a revolutionary government against the established forces of law and order.

I claim that, in view of these indisputable facts, there was no course open to any Government worthy of the name to take any action other than that which we did take. The Government was faced with this direct threat to its existence, instigated, not by a comprehensive movement covering the whole of India, but by a sectional organisation which admittedly only represents a small portion of the great populations of India. Any Government worthy of the name, if government was to continue in India at all, was bound to accept the challenge.

But I am aware—it has been borne in upon me at Question Time in the House—that there are some Members who, while accepting the general claim that the Government had to take action to meet this threat, yet think, first of all, that the action that we are taking is excessive and, secondly, that we are abusing the powers under which we are acting.

Those are serious charges and they need to be answered. Let me take them in turn. Let me take first of all the charge that the powers that we have taken are excessive. I admit that the powers that have been given to the Government of India and the Provincial Governments are very formidable. They are set out in detail in the Appendices to the Blue Book. They cover, and they are intended to cover, the whole field of possible attacks upon the Government. I believe that they should cover the whole of that field. I believe that it would have been a derogation of our duty if, faced with this critical situation, we had taken only inadequate powers. I believe, further, that we are much more likely to reach the point when emergency powers can be brought to an end if we act over the whole field and leave no openings to this hostile organisation to make our action unsuccessful. I therefore claim, first of all, that so far from its being a cause of criticism against us that we have taken full and comprehensive powers, criticism would

have been just if the powers that we had taken had not been comprehensive.

There is another consideration that I would like to put to hon. Members on the benches opposite. The attack that has been launched by Congress was not an attack upon the British Government but an attack on any government, and more than that it was an attack upon the whole community. I will tell hon. Members why I make that claim. If the machine of government had broken down it would have been apparent to the great populations of the Indian Continent that action such as Congress had launched had been successful, and it would have been a direct incentive to this community or that community to have undertaken the same kind of direct action. Every hon. Member of this House knows how inflammable is the material in India when anything touching the communal question arises. During all these weeks I have been terrified lest a breakdown of the machine of government should be a direct incentive to the renewal of communal strife. Let hon. Members constantly remember those terrible events at Cawnpore last year. On no account must we run the risk of any repetition of that kind of catastrophe. I do urge upon every hon. Member of this Committee that at a time of crisis such as this it is essential that the Central Government and the Provincial Governments should have the greatest possible powers, drastic though they may be, to make a repetition of that kind of catastrophe as impossible as we can make it.

I come now to the second criticism, to the criticism that the authorities are abusing the powers that they possess, that they are using them ruthlessly, and that they are using them in such a way as not only to deal with an actual emergency, but also in such a way as to suppress the legitimate expression of public opinion. There, again, I ask hon. Members to look at the actual facts of the situation. I am just as fully alive as they are to the danger of uncontrolled administrative action, and I tell hon. Members that the Viceroy and his Government are just as alive to that danger as am I. But when I look at the facts of the situation during these last weeks, and when I think of the dangers in India, when I think of the great difficulties with which the authorities, great and small, are faced, I do inevitably come to the conclusion that upon the whole these powers have been used with common sense and with moderation. It may be that here and there, probably in the face of great danger and difficulty, some individual may have misused his authority. If that be so, investigation always



follows action of that kind in the ordinary course. So far as I myself am concerned, and it is also the attitude of the Government of India, we have been ready to look into a number of specific charges made in individual cases, and the result of our inquiries goes to show that, speaking generally, the authorities, and particularly the police, have behaved exceedingly well in a very difficult situation, and that upon the whole these drastic powers have not been abused or used to an excessive degree.

Before I leave this part of my subject, I should like to say a word or two about one phase of the situation that naturally causes us great anxiety—the position in Bengal and the terrorist campaign that has been launched against the Government during recent months. The most drastic powers contained in the Ordinances are powers that have been given to the Government of Bengal to deal with terrorism. Terrorism, as every hon. Member knows, has had a hold in Bengal for many years past, and in recent years, indeed in recent months, the terrorist threat has become far more serious. In the past few months there have been 19 serious terrorist outrages, for the most part against British officials. There have been outrages against women and children. A new and sinister feature of these outrages is that women and girls have been brought into the service of the terrorists. Only last week I had the painful experience of hearing from Mrs. Stevens, the widow of one of the most popular, one of the most intelligent and one of the most sympathetic officials in the whole of the Indian service, the story of her husband's murder at the hands of two girls.

I will not repeat the details to the Committee nor will I give them extracts, of which I have pages, from terrorist leaflets that until recently were everywhere being circulated in Bengal, for the express purpose of inciting to the wholesale murder of British officials. Perhaps even more sinister than some of these other features is the undeniable fact that many of the more extreme Congress leaders in Bengal have been hand in glove with certain of the leaders of the terrorist movement. Do we need any further justification for the action that we have had to take in Bengal and elsewhere? It would have been a surrender of the elementary duty of any Government if we had not invested the Government of Bengal with the fullest and most comprehensive powers possible to make an attempt to cut this blot out of the life of Bengal.

I claim, in view of what I have said to the Committee, that we have had ample justification for the measures that we

have taken, that we have used those measures with caution and moderation, and that the Government of India, from the highest official, from the Viceroy down to the most junior police constable, have acted with courage, with caution and with common sense, and that the machine of government, in the face of great difficulties, has functioned with remarkable efficiency.

May I now sum up the situation as I see it to-day in India? I will begin with the North-West Frontier Province. All my information goes to show that the Red Shirt Movement there, which a few months ago was so imminent a danger to the Government as a whole, is beginning to collapse. From all sides there is evidence of a great change of opinion in the Frontier Province. Men who a few weeks ago stood out in an attitude of hostility are coming in to co-operate with the Government. Revenue is coming in better than it has come in for several years. I think it may be claimed that, speaking generally, the position in the North-West Frontier to-day is far more stable than it has been for many months past. Then there is the second danger zone, the United Provinces, a great Province almost entirely agrarian, a Province in which there are more than 1,000,000 landowners, many of them very small landowners, and in which in the few weeks before Christmas there was every evidence of a movement so serious as almost to be an agrarian revolution. My information, confirmed in the last telegram that I received to-day from India, goes to show that what is called the no-rent movement is now virtually at an end.

In most of the other Provinces the position is, on the whole, satisfactory. There are, however, two exceptions to which if I am to make a candid survey of the situation, I want to make allusions. There is the position in Bengal, where we have not yet been able to crush the terrorist machine. It will take time, but I have no reason to suppose that we shall not succeed. Then there is Bombay. The position in the Presidency is definitely better, but the position in Bombay City itself is still unsatisfactory in the matter of picketing and the economic boycott. Even in Bombay City itself I think I should be right in saying that the position is improving. The Government of Bombay has full powers to deal with the situation, and I should very much hope to see a more marked improvement in the weeks to come than we have seen up to the present. On the whole, it can be claimed that the drastic measures that we have taken have achieved the results that we expected

of them and that the position to-day is immensely better than it was in the weeks at the end of last year.

There are still two serious difficulties before us. There is, first of all, that ever-present difficulty in Indian affairs, the communal trouble; and secondly, there is the difficulty, particularly formidable in a great peasant continent such as India, of the economic depression. Of the communal position I intend to say not more than two or three sentences. I realise the deep anxiety that is felt by the minorities communities, particularly by the Moslems and the Depressed Classes. I know how anxious they are to be satisfied that their legitimate claims will be met before they agree to the provisions of a future Constitution. I also know, from long months of discussion, how many dangerous reactions are involved in the communal question, and I can only say to-day that the Government realise the importance and urgency of the question, that on no account will we repudiate our obligations to the minorities communities that we have most solemnly undertaken, and that we ask the representatives of the minorities, particularly the representatives of the Moslem community that has with great faith and loyalty abstained from non-co-operation, to believe in our sincerity and to be patient if, in the inevitable process of events, we do not rush into a premature decision. His Majesty's Government and the Government of India are in close consultation over this thorny question, and until we have completed our discussions I cannot make any announcement of our immediate intentions.

Then there is the second formidable difficulty that faces us, the economic position. I do not know whether it is always realised in this House how great is the economic crisis through which India has been passing. India, as we all know, is a country for the most part of small and poor peasants, and the fall in prices has hit them as hard as it has hit any community in any part of the world. The prices of primary commodities have fallen in some cases by 100 per cent., and when we take into account the smallness of the income of most of these peasant proprietors and that nine out of ten of them owe considerable sums to money-lenders—there are no fewer than 45,000 moneylenders in the agrarian province of the Punjab—we realise their grave position. The burden of debt upon their shoulders owing to the fall in prices has gone up sometimes to the extent of 70 per cent.

To complete the picture, when we also take into account the fact that Provincial revenues are to a great extent dependent

upon the land revenue, it will be realised how very serious is the economic crisis through which India has been passing. Fortunately, however, there are signs that the prices of primary commodities in India are beginning to rise.

I am glad to be able to tell the Committee that we are no longer faced with so black a prospect as faced us last September. On all sides there has been a remarkable improvement. Ever since the rupee was linked with sterling last September things have been steadily improving, prices have been rising, and a new and unexpected feature has shown itself—the vast sums of gold which have been exported and have produced a striking improvement in India and in the rest of the world. No less than £36,000,000 sterling of gold has been exported from India since last September, and the export looks likely to continue. Gold has been exported from India since last September at a higher rate than it has ever been exported from the goldfields of South Africa. This export has greatly helped to strengthen the rupee exchange and the position of Indian credit in the markets of the city of London, and the world.

If I needed evidence of this I would point to the fact that only a few weeks ago the Government of India was able to repay without further borrowing a loan of no less than £15,000,000 sterling which was raised in 1921 and 1922. Has any other great Government in any part of the world during the last six months repaid a big loan without having to borrow further for repayment? If I look at the quotations of the Government of India stocks in the City to-day I see the greatest possible improvement as compared with the quotations of last September. Thus a great step forward has been taken towards winning back for Indian credit the high place it formerly held in the estimation of the investing public. If I may sum up the economic situation in a sentence, I would say that India is through the worst of the crisis and is in a better position to take advantage of a general recovery than almost any other great country in the world.

The Committee has now borne with me for an unconscionable time while I have exposed to them the Indian situation as I see it to-day. Hon. Members will not wish me to take up their time further, but it may be that many of them will be saying to themselves: “You have spoken to us of the India of to-day at great length, but you have said nothing to us of the India of to-morrow.” Let them not think, if this

criticism is in their mind, that I am not constantly pondering over the India of to-morrow. If I have not spoken of it to-day, it is because this Debate is for a specific purpose, to discuss Indian administration during the last few months, and I should have been out of order if I had plunged into a discussion of the constitutional changes of to-morrow.

### 3. SPEECH DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE 24<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 1932, ON THE MOTION FOR THE EASTER ADJOURNMENT.

*(Extracts regarding Constitutional Reforms.)*

I pass to the second of the charges brought by the hon. Member, that we have terminated the period of good will and that the atmosphere of the Round Table Conference has been brought to a premature conclusion. If the House will allow me I will go a little into detail on this very important side of the Indian question. The House is very much concerned in a charge of this kind. The Round Table Conference policy was not only the policy of the Government but the policy of the House of Commons, approved by an overwhelming majority of the House last December. The House of Commons, therefore, has a right to know whether or not we are proceeding with the Round Table Conference policy on the lines set out in the Prime Minister's statement last December. Let me, therefore, make a report to the House of the progress we have actually made since the Debate last September.

I am glad at the outset to be able to assure hon. Members that we have been proceeding with the policy of the Round Table Conference exactly as we said we would proceed last December. Take first the pledge we gave that for the purpose of continuing the Round Table Conference work we would at once appoint a number of committees to investigate on the spot certain very important details connected with the All-India Federation. Those Committees were appointed without any delay. They were composed for the most part, or to a great extent, of Members of this House and of another place, and they went off to India at the beginning of the year. I am glad to be able to tell the House to-day that each of those Committees has made substantial progress. They have been working under great pressure. For instance the Franchise Committee, presided over by the Under-Secretary of State for India, and the States Inquiry Committee, presided over by the Chancellor of the Duchy, have been travelling from one end of India to another. They have been facing constant changes of climate and interminable railway journeys, and all this time they have been making substantial progress with the inquiries in which they are engaged. I go so far as to say

that every Member of this House who is interested in the question of All-India Federation ought to be grateful to these Committees, and particularly to their chairmen, for the great efforts that they have been making to complete in a comparatively short time work that in the normal course of events might have taken many months, or indeed many years.

There is a third inquiry with which also considerable progress has been made. My noble Friend the Member for Hastings (Lord E. Percy) has been making inquiry into the relations between Federal and Provincial and States finance at Delhi. Hon. Members who know my noble Friend will not be surprised to hear that he has impressed everybody at Delhi by the intensity of the concentration of his labours. The House will forgive me for going into some detail into one question, the importance of which they will see at the end. I come to the Consultative Indian Committee. That committee also emerged as a result of pledges that we gave at the Round Table Conference. It is a Committee composed of very representative Indians. It was our intention, and we carried out the intention both in the spirit and in the letter, that we should ask this Committee to give us an Indian opinion upon a whole series of questions dealing with the constitution. The Committee have already had two sessions and they will have another session in the course of the spring. There again, while I do not for a moment say that they have reached or nearly reached an end of their labours, they have already been able to collect information upon a series of points that will be very valuable to us when we come to draft any Constitution Bill.

Lastly, we here at home have not been idle. We have been having daily meetings with all the expert opinion available, and we have been considering detail by detail, the points that are likely to emerge in any Indian constitutional measure. I hope that I have said enough to convince every hon. Member, wherever he sits, that we have gone forward with the best good will in the world with the inquiries that we undertook to make last December, and that these inquiries have been progressing in spite of the great difficulties with which we are faced, and have been progressing very satisfactorily. That does not mean that we do not realise to the full the very great difficulties that are inherent in the problems with which you are faced. I have told the House over and over again that we do not create difficulties for the purpose of blocking constitutional progress. These difficulties are not of our

creation; they are inherent in the present conditions in India, Let me say a few words about two of them that have emerged several times in the course of this Debate First of all, there is the great and ever-present communal problem. Secondly, there is the great complexity of the whole question of an All-India Federation; that is to say, a Federation for a continent of 350,000,000 people, living under different conditions, having different ideals, members of different religions, governed under different polities. Those are two great difficulties with which we are faced. I should be the last person in the world to underrate their complexity.

Let me say a word or two about the communal question, in response to the invitation of the hon. Member opposite. The hon. Member will not be surprised when I tell him that since I have been at the India Office never has a day passed without my attention being drawn in some sort of way to the complexities of the communal question. The longer I am at the India Office the more difficult I realise the problem to be. "Why then," some hon. Members say, "do you touch the question at all? Why, if Indians will not agree among themselves, does the British Government not stand aside? Why should it embroil itself in a controversy out of which probably nothing will emerge except that the British Government will satisfy very few and dissatisfy very many?" That is a very natural kind of argument. But let me put the alternative to my hon. Friends. The alternative is that if the communities do not agree among themselves and His Majesty's Government stands out of the controversy altogether, there can be no constitutional advance of any kind. Not only will there be no constitutional advance at the Centre, but there can be no constitutional advance in the Provinces either.

It stands to reason that if you are to have Provincial autonomy—almost everyone is agreed that, whatever may be the ultimate constitution of India, Provincial autonomy will form part of it—you cannot have Provincial autonomy without some kind of decision, even though it may be provisional, that enables the electorates of the Provinces to be determined. That being so, the Prime Minister, on behalf of the Government, said quite categorically last December that we still very much hoped that the Indians would agree among themselves; that without that agreement the position was bound to be much less satisfactory, but, that supposing they did not agree among themselves, the Government at any rate would have to intervene to the extent of making some kind of provisional decision



which would make it possible for constitutional advance to take place. We were not prepared, in a word, to admit a complete deadlock.

That is exactly the position in which His Majesty's Government stand. They made their position perfectly clear last December. They said that by far the best solution was that the communities should agree among themselves and that if the communities failed to agree the Government would be compelled to give a provisional decision which would make it possible for constitutional advance to be undertaken. In this contingency I think we are all agreed that as much as possible of the constitutional structure should be left to be settled by agreement between the Indians themselves and ourselves. It would, indeed, be a sorry commentary upon Indian statesmanship, if His Majesty's Government had to give a decision upon a whole series of vital questions which enter into the problem of All-India Federation. If His Majesty's Government had to give so comprehensive a decision, the result would be that we here should be dictating the terms of an Indian constitution and we should be abandoning the attempt that we have so persistently made during the last two or three years, to build up an Indian Constitution upon a foundation of mutual agreement.

I am exceedingly sorry that the communities have not agreed among themselves. I am also very sorry that our Moslem friends should appear to be worrying about the future. I had many talks with them during the autumn. I think I know their point of view and I think I know the point of view of the depressed classes, of the Christian communities, of the Anglo-Indians and of the European residents, and I think, particularly, in the case of the Moslems their fear is this. They are very anxious lest they should be drawn on into a whole series of discussions about the Central Government of India and that, in the meanwhile, no communal decision should be given at all; that at the end of those discussions they should find that adequate safeguards had not been given to them, while meantime they would have involved themselves with a number of agreements connected with the Central Government. I think that, in a sentence or two, is their attitude. I should like to say to them this morning that we have not the least intention of repudiating the pledges that we gave last December. We said categorically that in any new Indian Constitution there must be adequate safeguards for the minorities. We stand by that statement both in the letter and in the spirit and I

venture to say to them to-day, that if they believed our word—as they did believe it—last December, there is no reason why they should not believe our word to-day. The Government have given a definite pledge. That pledge has been approved by an overwhelming majority of this House. We have not the least intention of repudiating it.

In the meantime I venture to suggest to the leaders of the communities that they should concentrate their efforts on organising their forces for the inevitable elections of the future rather than upon heated discussions as to what the British Government are or are not going to do. There is a real need in India to-day for the effective organisation of political parties and the time is short between now and the date of the future elections when grave issues have to be decided.

Let me proceed to refer to the second of the two great difficulties which I have mentioned, namely, the great complexity of All-India Federation. Any hon. Member who has studied the question of All-India Federation will agree with me that it involves some of the most complicated issues that can possibly be conceived in connection with any constitution. It is the fashion in certain circles to decry the advantages of All-India Federation and to criticise any scheme of All-India Federation as impracticable in so huge and heterogeneous a continent as India. While I fully realise the great complexities of All-India Federation, I do not at all agree that the conception of All-India Federation has disappeared into thin air. I am convinced that an All-India Federation, comprising both the Indian States and the Provinces of British India, will give India much the best chance of constitutional development on safe and sound foundations.

For many months we discussed the bearings of All-India Federation at the Round Table Conference. All our discussions were based upon the conception of All-India Federation. After many months of these discussions the conception of All-India Federation held the field, and it was upon the basis of All-India Federation that we agreed to advance. I wish to say to-day, with the full authority of the Government, that we are as deeply interested in the development of All-India Federation as we were last winter. We wish to see the Princes enter a Federal system, and we believe not only will they best serve their own interests by entering it, but that they will best serve the interests of India and the Empire as well by doing so. Of course, there must be differences of opinion among 600 States upon so complex a question. Indeed, I should have been surprised if those differences had not made themselves

felt. Each Prince is, in duty to his dynasty and his State, bound to scrutinise most carefully the terms upon which he is invited to enter a new form of Government. States that differ so greatly in history, in size, and in resources cannot be expected always to think alike on the kind of questions that are raised by Federation.

When all these diverse elements are taken into account, it may well be that modifications will be required in the Federal plan as it stands at the moment. Of course, we are ready to consider such modifications. We have not the least wish to impose, even if we could do so, a dictated scheme upon the Indian States. What we want is a workable scheme of effective federation, and by effective federation we mean, not a mere agreement to co-operate but a scheme that will combine British India and the Indian States for agreed purposes in an organic, constitutional structure. I hope I have said enough to make it clear that the British Government are intensely interested in the success of an All-India Federation. I am glad to think that my latest information from India goes to show that in spite of the obvious differences as to detail and method, there is a solid body of support, both in the Indian States and in British India, behind an All-India Federal advance.

Now let me sum up what I have ventured to say to the House. I hope that I have said enough to convince the House of Commons that we are proceeding with our programme as we said that we would proceed with it, that we intend to proceed with our programme as we said that we intended to proceed with it, and that we do not intend to be deflected from that programme by threats, by fears, or by sudden alarms. In the meantime, we do feel it the primary duty of this or any other Government to maintain law and order and to prevent India drifting into anarchy and chaos. That does not mean that we believe that the country can be governed for ever by Ordinances. Ordinances are, in the nature of their character, meant to deal with an emergency. The Ordinances will be kept in force in India just so long as the emergency continues. I should not be candid with the House if I suggested to them to-day that that emergency has yet passed away. The emergency is still there, and as long as it is there the Ordinances must be kept in operation. We shall, therefore, proceed with our programme as we stated it last December and as I have stated it this morning. We shall go straight on with it. We believe that we shall carry it in our stride, and in the meantime we shall maintain, strongly and firmly, the foundations of stable Government.

## 4. SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE DINNER ON THE 9TH JUNE, 1932

(Extracts).

I stand to-night in the presence of the representatives of one of the most remarkable organisations that has been created in the history of the world. Mr. H. G. Wells has declared that the Indian Civil Service, this small *corps d'élite* that now consists of about 860 Europeans, and 430 Indians, was one of the greatest discoveries of the 19th century. I go further and I say that when the history of the British Empire is finally written, the two greatest achievements that will be credited to its record will be the development of Parliamentary institutions and the organisation of a Civil Service unconnected with party politics and uncontaminated with selfish interests. And of these two achievements I put the development of an efficient and disinterested Civil Service as the greater. When we look abroad to countries where there is no such Service, where the spoils of administration go to the political victors and where uncertainty of tenure leads inevitably to self-interest and even corruption, we can indeed count ourselves fortunate in the system that we have developed.

Your Service is the author of this great institution. You gentlemen of the Indian Civil Service are the members of the oldest Civil Service in the world. Indeed, the very name of Civil Service was first given to the employes of the East India Company who were engaged in mercantile work. For centuries you were a Civil Service before these upstarts of Whitehall were even heard of. You had your traditions, your habits and your conventions generations before such mushroom growths as the Treasury and the Foreign Office had reared their heads. You even had your own epistolary style. In the Library of the India Office there is recorded the observation of an eighteenth-century Director to a youthful aspirant in the East India Company's service. "The style as we like is the humdrum." Great men gathered around your progress at every stage, foremost among them Warren Hastings, whose bi-centenary we are celebrating this year, and who in his farewell message to the Service that he had done so much to organise testified to "its disdain of sordid emolument with a spirit of assiduity and

a consequent expertness exceeding, I dare venture to affirm, the habits of any community under the British rule."

Those words were truly spoken at the end of the eighteenth century. They are even truer to-day, for during the last hundred and fifty years you have built up a record that not even Warren Hastings with his far-sighted vision could ever have conceived to be possible.

But to-day, in spite of this great record, you are nervous of the future. You are faced with a world that has become very poor. Not only have your activities been restricted, but you have been called upon to make heavy personal sacrifices. And you are faced with a world in which changes are following each other in quick succession and in which the old landmarks are gradually disappearing.

Not without reason you are saying to yourselves, what is the future going to bring? Is it worth our while to go on in a Service in which the prospects seem to be uncertain? How can we advise our sons to follow in our steps when the conditions of life seem likely to be so different?

I am not surprised at your anxieties. Great changes are taking place and the world of to-morrow in India no less than Great Britain will not be the world of to-day or yesterday. Let me, however, suggest to you certain considerations before you give a verdict upon which so much of the progress and happiness of India depends.

Would you not perhaps agree with me when I say that the changes that we are discussing are not new and revolutionary changes? The real change in the conditions of service is not coming in the years to come. It came years ago when political institutions were first set up in India and when the Indian politician and the Councils first came upon the scene. It was then that politics first entered into the life of the civilian. It was then that the civilian was first called upon to play the almost impossibly difficult rôle of administrator and politician combined. In Whitehall we have a saying that "it is the duty of the Civil Servant to tell the politician what to do, and the duty of the politician not to do it." You unfortunate public men in India have for many years past had to play this double and sometimes contradictory rôle. It is a rôle that I am sure that with all your great ability and adaptability you have neither desired nor enjoyed, and I cannot help thinking that in the future, as the two spheres of politics and administration become more distinct, you will not in your heart of hearts regret the change. If I see the future of public life in India

correctly, your great Service will become more strictly administrative. It will become more specialised and more differentiated. If this be the course of events, it will be a course of events in full harmony with what is happening in every progressive country of the world where the very complexity of government is necessitating a more scientific and minutely differentiated type of machine. But unless the clock of progress is to be put back for generations in India, there must for many years to come be a keen demand for the expert knowledge and specialised advice that you will be able to provide.

Yes, you may say, that is all very well for the distant future, but what about the immediate present? What guarantee have we that the British Government will not throw us over and that the Indian politicians, regardless of the ultimate good of India, will not, at the instigation of the extremists, make a vendetta against us?

My answer to you is that the British Government is going to keep in the letter and in the spirit every contract that has been made with you as with every other Indian Service. As Secretary of State for India, I am under a statutory obligation to safeguard your interests. That statutory obligation I shall carry out. But greater even than the statutory obligation is the moral obligation that I and every other Minister, and indeed every Member of Parliament, owes to men who have served us and the Empire bravely, brilliantly and unselfishly.

To-night I say to you in a single sentence that we shall pass no Bill that does not to the best of our ability safeguard your rights and the obligations into which we have entered with you. Between now and the passing of any Bill we shall have ample opportunity of discussing in detail the best way in which to ensure the continuous sanctity of the bond that we have made. Do not distrust us. We have given our word and we intend to keep it, and there is no self-respecting Indian who would not despise us if we failed to keep it.

As to the future, I will only say that it is my considered view, and, indeed, it is the view of responsible and respected Indians, that for many years to come there will be an insistent need for expert administrators such as yourselves.

If we listened only to the critics and the pessimists, I do not believe that we could go on living at all. So far as India is concerned, we should have to assume that the future will inevitably bring a terrible struggle between the East and the West, and repression or chaos as the only two alternatives.

I have been long enough in politics, I have been long enough in British Governments, to realise the counter risks of a facile optimism that will not face the facts of the post-war world. But none the less I would say to-night that although I am fully conscious of the great difficulties with which we are faced on every hand, I none the less see no ground for this black pessimism that is determined of two unpleasant alternatives always to choose them both.

If I thought that there was an irreconcilable gulf fixed between the East and the West, between Great Britain and India, I should not be engaged upon my present task. I should not be daily and almost hourly talking and corresponding with British and Indians about the future of the Indian Constitution. It is because I believe that there is a harmony to be achieved between the British and the Indian notes that I go on with my work, and it is because I believe that this harmony will be achieved that I am certain that, if once we can set our eyes upon the future rather than fix them morbidly upon the wrangles of the past, Indians will need our help just as we shall need theirs in solving the momentous problems that face the British Commonwealth of Nations.

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5. SPEECH DELIVERED ON THE 24<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 1932, AT THE CLOSE OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE INDIAN ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE, THE LORD CHANCELLOR BEING IN THE CHAIR.

Lord Chancellor, to-day we are attempting to finish our endeavour to recreate the fellowship of the Round Table in modern conditions—the fellowship founded by King Arthur and depicted upon the opposite wall of this Royal Robing Room.

Lord Chancellor, we have not been unsuccessful in our attempt. Already others wish to follow our example. Only a few weeks ago a distinguished American came to see me to ask me for details as to our procedure. Evidently he was contemplating the experiment of a Round Table Conference for the Philippines. Lord Chancellor, imitation is the surest form of flattery, and the American's interest shows that the experiment upon which we have been engaged has been watched with the closest and most sympathetic attention in every part of the world.

To-day we are looking back at our past work. To-morrow we shall be looking forward to the next step.

As to the past, we have not been working in an empty void. We have not been attempting to create a situation in the air. We have not been, like the Abbe Siéyès in the years of the French Revolution, creating paper constitutions. From start to finish we have been circumscribed by the hard facts of the world as we find it. We have been confronted with the problem of reconciling the claims of three partners who have for many generations been united in an undertaking of far-reaching ramifications: Great Britain on the one hand, British India on the other, and Indian India on the other. The old Articles of Association were getting out of date; a new bond of union had to be found.

Lord Chancellor, the great achievement of the first Round Table Conference was to establish the fact for the first and, I believe, for all time that the new bond must be the bond of an All-India Federation with the rights of each of the three parties effectively safeguarded. I believe that historians will say that this decision was a turning point in the course of the British Empire.

To-day let us with gratitude remember those Members who took so prominent a part in bringing this ideal into the realm of



practical politics Let us remember in particular His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner, who I think was the first of the Princes to press his view in this respect upon the Conference Let us also remember Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, if I may say so, was the first member of the Conference who fully realised the implications of this great ideal and who in those early days was much more conversant with the details of Federation than I think any other member of the Conference Lord Chancellor, let us throw our minds back to those days Scarcely any of us, having lived under a unitary form of government, really understood the implications of a Federation. I am told that at that time the booksellers of London did a roaring trade in the sale of manuals about Federation. I am told that there was a positive run upon the London Library by the various Government Departments concerned in order to get any text books that bore upon that difficult subject. Sir, if I may say so, it was of the greatest value to all our subsequent proceedings that we had from the very start the expert and technical advice of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru upon all those very difficult constitutional questions. The Federal idea then was the great idea that emerged from the first meetings of the Conference.

The second Conference met in the face of very great difficulties. On the one hand we were in the throes of a world economic crisis; on the other we were faced with a change of Government and an impending General Election. Those factors in themselves placed great difficulties in the way of our deliberations.

But there was a third difficulty. There was the difficulty of the communal question. There we found with the best will in the world at every stage last year we were brought up against the barrier of the communal difficulty. I think the real achievement of the Conference last year was to start on foot the whole series of enquiries, most important of which were the detailed enquiries that led to the Government's Communal Award and included amongst which were the invaluable Reports of the Committees that went to India in the New Year—Lord Lothian's Committee, Mr. Davidson's Committee and Lord Eustace Percy's Committee. I am quite sure that without the work done by those Committees and without the Communal Award, that reluctantly but none the less inevitably the Government had to make, our deliberations this year would have been rendered impossible and infructuous.

I now come, Lord Chancellor, to the work of this Conference and I would venture to sum up the results in two sentences. I

would say, first of all, we have clearly delimited the field upon which the future constitution is going to be built. In a much more detailed manner than in the last two years we have delimited the spheres of activity of the various parts of the constitution. Secondly, and I regard this result as much more important than even that important first result, we have I believe created an *esprit de corps* amongst all of us that is determined to see the building that is going to be reared upon the field that we marked out both complete in itself and completed at the earliest possible date. Lord Chancellor, I said that we had marked out the ground. Let me explain by a few examples what I mean by that assertion. I take the various parts of the constitutional structure in order.

I begin with the part that Indian India, the India of the States, is to play in the Federation. There we have made it quite clear that there is no risk in any respect to the treaties or to the obligations into which they and we have entered. I hope that I have made it quite clear that all questions governed by that general term "paramountcy" do not enter into the Federal scheme at all. I think also I may say that we made some progress in the enquiry over which Lord Irwin presided one day this week into the methods by which the States will accede to the Federation.

Let me say in passing—for I think it may help our future discussions both here and in India—that we have always regarded an effective Federation as meaning the accession of a reasonable number of States and, as at present advised, we should regard something like not less than half the States seats and not less than half the population as the kind of definition that we have in mind.

Next I come to the Federation and the Units. Here, again, I think we have made great progress in delimiting the field between the Centre on the one hand and the Provincial and States Units on the other. We have been very carefully through the lists of Federal and non-Federal activities, and we have got much nearer to agreement than we have ever reached before. It is now quite clear that there will be a definite delimitation of the activities of each of these three parts of the Federal structure. To-day I need not go into detail, for the Report of the Distribution of Powers Committee will show, both to you and to the world outside, the progress that we have made in that direction.

Next there is the very difficult question of Federal Finance, one of the most vital questions in the whole field of Federal activities. Unfortunately we were discussing that question at a

time of great difficulty. We have been discussing it at a time when no Government in the world has sufficient money for its needs. But I think I can claim that there again we have made some substantial progress. I fully admit that there are differences still to be recognised and to be reconciled. I do not think it could be otherwise in any question of this kind, but I should like to say to Lord Peel, who, as far as the Conference is concerned, is the father of Federal Finance—at present it is a rather difficult offspring, but I think as it grows up it will become easier to manage—how much indebted we are both to him and his Committee for having made the progress that they have achieved. I think I can say that the work that they have done will very materially help the Government in coming to a decision, in consultation with the Central Government and the Provincial Governments in India, at an early date.

Then, Lord Chancellor, there are those difficult questions that we have always had with us in connection with the Federal institutions, the questions about the size of the Chambers and about the allocation of seats. I say quite frankly that, as regards the size of the Chambers, I had hoped that we should have reached a greater measure of agreement than we have found possible during these last weeks. It has been made clear that there still are differences to be reconciled, not only differences between British India and the States, but differences between the bigger States and the smaller States, differences even between some members of the Chamber of Princes and other members of the Chamber of Princes.

I wish that we could have reached further agreement upon this difficult question. I am quite sure that we have got to come to a decision upon it in the early future. To-day I would venture to say that, so far as the Government is concerned, we have come to the view that whatever may be the numbers of the Second Chamber, some system of grouping will have to be adopted. I would say further that we must await further discussions that are going to take place in India, in, I hope, the comparatively near future, about the size of the Chambers. I hope they will succeed, but I would like to emphasise the fact that, whether by the parties directly concerned, or whether, if they prefer it, by the British Government, a decision must be reached upon this point in the comparatively near future unless a great part of our future discussions is to be gravely impeded.

Then there was the question of the representation of the communities in the Centre, particularly of the Muslim community. There I think I can say definitely—I think I have said

it indirectly very often before—that the Government consider that the Muslim community should have a representation of 33½ per cent. of the British Indian seats in the Federal Chambers. So far as Indian India is concerned, that must be a matter for arrangement between the communities affected and the India of the Princes. But so far as the British Government has any part in the question, we will at any time give our good offices to making it as easy as possible for an arrangement between those parties in regard to future allocation of seats. There again I venture to say that definitely to-day, because I am anxious that that factor in the problem should not in any way impede the future progress in elaborating the further stages of the Constitution.

Now, with all these Federal questions, I can see that there is a grave anxiety in the minds of many members of the Conference—and I can sympathise with that anxiety—lest the various complications of which I have just given you certain instances should take too long to settle, and that the Federation itself will drift into the dim distance and will cease to be a reality in practical politics.

Feeling that anxiety, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru asked last night that a definite date should be placed in the Bill at which time the Federation should come into being. He qualified his request—and qualified it, no doubt quite rightly—with the reservation that if the conditions were not fulfilled, Parliament must have some means at its disposal for postponing the date of the Federation.

Now I agree with him that the last thing in the world that we wish is to see the Federation drift back into being simply an idea and not an integral part of the Indian Constitution. But I think I ought to say that I do find a difficulty in agreeing—if indeed this is the time to agree or disagree—to anything in the nature of a definite date in the provisions of the Act. The difficulties that are in my mind are twofold. I am not quite sure—and here I am speaking very candidly in the presence of representatives of the States—what reaction something that might appear to be rather in the nature of an ultimatum might have on the Indian States themselves.

Again, I find this difficulty, I feel that the machinery of the Constitution will be of an extremely complicated nature, and I think that Parliament, if it were confronted with a definite date, might demand a longer interval and more cautious provisions than it would require if there were no fixed date. After all, the machinery for bringing the Act into operation is going to be

of a very complicated nature. I have always contemplated that some such method as a Parliamentary Resolution of both Houses would be adopted for bringing the Federation into operation, and that that method would be adopted at the earliest possible opportunity.

What I can say to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru is that we are going to do our utmost to remove every obstacle in the way of Federation and to remove it at the earliest possible date. Let me also say to him, we do not intend to inaugurate any kind of Provincial autonomy under conditions which might leave Federation to follow on as a mere contingency in the future. We shall, as I say, between now and the passage of the Bill, do everything in our power—here I am speaking, I think, not only for the British Government but for the British delegation as a whole—to remove any obstacles that may at present stand in the way of the Federation coming into being at as early a date as possible.

Lastly, let me say a word upon another side of this part of our discussions. For the last two years we have discussed the question of certain new Provinces. We have discussed the question of Sind from the very opening of our deliberations two years ago. Last year we discussed in detail for the first time the question of Orissa. Since those discussions we have had expert enquiries into both questions.

Basing our views upon the Reports of those enquiries, basing our views still more on what appears to be a very general agreement both in India and in Great Britain, we have come definitely to the conclusion that Sind and Orissa should both be separate Provinces. No doubt there will be details of machinery to settle and some of them of a rather complicated kind. For instance, there are questions connected with the boundary of Orissa that have not yet been fully considered. But it is the definite intention of the Government that in any All-India Federation both those great territories should enter as distinct Provinces.

Lord Chancellor, I have now dealt with the more prominent of the features of our discussions that emerge upon the more directly constitutional side of the Federation itself. Let me now come to the other series of problems that in some cases affect more directly Great Britain and in other cases affect certain communities and certain interests in India itself. I mean by this all that chapter of questions that by a rough and ready phrase we have described as "safeguards." Lord Chancellor, let me say at the outset of my observations that

I regard the safeguards not as a stone wall that blocks a road, but as the hedges on each side that no good driver ever touches but that prevent people on a dark night falling into the ditch. They are not intended to obstruct a real transfer of responsible power. They are not intended to impede the day to day administration of any Indian Minister. They are rather ultimate controls that we hope will never need to be exercised for the greater reassurance of the world outside both in India itself and in Great Britain. Let me take the two instances that have been most prominent in this part of our discussions. Let me take the most difficult question of all, the difficulty of a transfer of financial responsibility. There, Lord Chancellor, I am not disclosing any secret when I say that during the last twelve months the British Government have fully accepted the fact that there can be no effective transfer of responsibility unless there is an effective transfer of financial responsibility. We have fully accepted that fact and we have done our best in the very difficult circumstances that have faced us to reconcile the legitimate demand of every Indian politician for financial control with the legitimate demand of every one who is interested in finance, not only for stability, but for a situation in which there would not even be a suggestion that stability could be questioned. For in the field of finance it is not only the fact itself that matters, but it is what people say about that fact.

Now our difficulties have arisen from two sources. In the first place, there is the fact that, as things are at present, a large part of the Indian revenue has to be devoted to meeting the obligations that have grown up during these years of partnership between India and Great Britain. That in itself—and I am sure no one would question the justice of the point of view—makes people here, investors who invested their money in Indian securities, men and women whose families are interested in the meeting of the old obligations, extremely nervous of any change. Secondly, there is the fact that we are passing through, I suppose, the most difficult financial crisis that has faced Asia and Europe for many generations. In the case of India there is a peculiar difficulty, namely, that a large body of short-term loans, raised under the name of the Secretary of State in London, fall due for payment in the next six years. That means that, if the Federation is to start with a good name, if its solvency is to be assured, some means must be found for meeting these short-term maturities without impairing the future of Indian credit.

Lord Chancellor, those are the hard facts that have faced the Government during the last twelve months. Those are the hard facts that we discussed in great detail and with great goodwill at the Financial Safeguards Committee. The British Government, the British delegation, and sections of the Conference, came to the view that in those conditions certain safeguards were absolutely necessary if we were to keep the confidence of the world outside and if we were to make it possible in the future for a Federal Government to raise money upon reasonable terms. That, gentlemen, in a few sentences is the history of the safeguards. That, in particular, is the history of the safeguard that has loomed very largely in our discussions this year, the history of the Reserve Bank. We feel that, if confidence is to be maintained in the financial stability and credit of India, a Reserve Bank must be in effective operation. Now our trouble has been—and it has been just as much a trouble for us as it has been for those members of the Conference who have been doubtful about this safeguard—that it is impossible to say exactly when a Reserve Bank of the kind that we all agree should be set up can come into effective operation.

What I can say—and I said it to the Committee, and I say it again to this Conference—is that we will take every step within our control to make the setting up of a Reserve Bank of this kind and its successful operation effective as early as possible. We will devote all our energies to that end. If events over which we have no control—namely, events connected with the world economic depression—are too strong for us, then I gave a pledge to the Committee, and I give it again to the Conference, that we will meet representative Indians and will discuss with them what is the best step to meet that situation. I hope the situation will not arise. If it does arise, we will take Indian opinion freely into our confidence, and we will discuss with them what is the best step to be taken.

I come now to the question of Defence, a question that again has loomed very large, and rightly so, in our discussions. We had first of all, as you all remember, a debate in full Conference—a debate in which I think I may claim that there was complete unanimity that Defence, until it can be transferred into Indian hands, remains the sole responsibility of the Crown. It was, however, clear to me in the course of the discussions, and afterwards in an informal talk, that I was able to have with certain leading members of the Conference, that there were differences of opinion as to the methods by which Indian

political opinion might be consulted in the administration of the Reserved subject.

Sir Tej Sapru reverted to these questions in his speech last night. Well, gentlemen, I think that I can say that the British Government can go at any rate some way—I myself believe a considerable way—towards removing some of the anxieties that he and his friends feel.

Let me take in order two or three of the principal points to which he and his friends attached importance in these discussions. First of all, there was the question of the discussion of the Defence Budget. We were all agreed that it should be non-votable. In the nature of things, I think that was inevitable, but we are quite prepared to take the necessary steps to see that the Budget should be put, as he and his friends wish, in blocks, not in a perfunctory manner simply to be discussed as a whole.

Next he was anxious about the employment of Indian troops outside India without the approval of the Federal Government or the Federal Legislature. There I think he and his friends were agreed that where it was actually a case of the defence of India, in which no Imperial considerations entered at all, the defence say, of the Frontier of India itself, there the responsibility—the sole responsibility—of the Crown should remain undiluted. More difficult questions arose in cases where Indian troops might be employed for purposes other than directly Indian purposes. Now in those cases I can say to him I would prefer not to be precise as to the exact method. I myself feel sure that a means will be found to leave the decision in some manner to the Federal Ministry and to the Federal Legislature.

Next, there was an important series of questions connected, first of all, with the Indianisation of the Army, that is to say, the greater participation of Indians themselves in the defence of India and, secondly, as to the bringing into consultation as much as possible the two sides of the Government. He and his friends were anxious that statutory provision should be made in some way for both these objects. Lord Chancellor, the British Government still take the view, and we feel we must maintain it, that statutory provision is too inelastic, if you define statutory provision in the narrow sense. But I think I can meet him and his friends effectively by including directions to the Governor-General in both these respects in the Instructions.



Now he said, quite rightly, that his attitude towards that proposal would depend very much upon the Instructions themselves. As regards the Instructions we intend first of all to allude to them in the body of the Statute. And then we intend to ask Parliament to agree to a novel procedure, but a procedure that I believe is well fitted to the conditions with which we are faced, namely, that before certain of them are submitted to His Majesty, both Houses of Parliament should have the opportunity of expressing their views upon them. The effect of that would be to give the Instructions a Statutory framework by the allusion in the Act itself, and to give them a Parliamentary framework by the Resolutions that would be passed approving of them before they are submitted for His Majesty's approval.

As to the other proposals that Sir Tej made in the matter of Defence, we still feel that the Governor-General should have an unfettered power in selecting his Defence Minister; but we will make it quite clear in the Instructions that we wish the two sides of the Government to work in the closest co-operation, and that we do definitely contemplate—I would ask his attention to this point, and we will make an allusion to it in the Instructions—that before the Estimates are actually put to the Federal Assembly the Finance Minister and no doubt the Prime Minister should have an opportunity of seeing them and giving to the Governor-General their views upon them.

I hope that I have said enough to show that if I have not been able to meet in the exact letter the wishes of Sir Tej and his friends, we have been able to go some way and I believe myself that in actual practice we shall find the result will be very much the result that he and his friends desire, namely, that although the question of Defence is a reserved question with the sole responsibility for it imposed upon the Governor-General as the representative of the Crown, in actual practice there will be the closest co-operation between the two sides of the Government.

I am afraid that I have taken up a very long time at our last meeting, but I hope I have said enough to show, not only to the Conference but to the world outside, the general outlines of the scheme that we intend to propose to the Joint Select Committee. But it is something more than a scheme upon which we have been engaged.

We have been planning a scheme and a very complicated scheme, but we have also been trying to create a spirit of co-operation. Several members of the Conference were very

kind to me last night when they said that I had played some small part in helping to foster this spirit of co-operation during the last few weeks. I thank them for what they said, but I say that their kind words were really undeserved. The spirit of co-operation is due to much greater events and to much greater people than any with whom I am connected or any that I could ever hope to emulate. This spirit of co-operation is not the result of the last few weeks. It is not the result even of the last two years of meetings of the Conference. It goes back to all the many prominent men both here and in India who, each in his own way, have attempted to make better relations between our two countries—Indians as well as British men, British men of the right of politics as well as of the left. Do not let us forget even when we disagree with their views of the future the great work that some of these more conservative administrators have done for India in the past. Do not let us forget the great men who have gone from these shores to India in recent years. We have been doubly fortunate in the Conference of this year in having two of the most distinguished ex-Viceroy's to help us who have ever carried out these most responsible duties of any in the whole Empire. We have had the invaluable help of Lord Reading, not only this year but from the very opening of our discussions, and in the first year of the Conference it was to a great extent Lord Reading's help that concentrated British public opinion upon the all-important question of an All-India Federation.

This year in particular we have had the great advantage of Lord Irwin's help. Lord Irwin, if I may so say, has put, in the help that he has given us during the last five weeks, the coping stone on the great work that he did in India.

Let us not forget also, in the company of the great men who have gone from these shores to India, the invaluable work done by Sir John Simon and his colleagues. Let us set aside all the minor questions of controversy that may have surrounded the work of the Royal Commission, and let us to-day remember only that, without that work, which is unique in the Parliamentary annals of Great Britain, it would have been impossible for us British members of the Government and of the British delegation, and, I believe, for many Indian members of this Conference also, to bring to bear the instructed mind that the great complexity of these Federal problems demands at every stage.

Last night Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru made an eloquent appeal for a chapter of renewed co-operation between every section of Indian opinion and ourselves. Lord Chancellor, let me say

that there is nothing that I should desire more earnestly myself. I want to see no empty chairs at the Conference with the Joint Select Committee. I will give to the words that Sir Tej Sapru uttered last night the full consideration that they demand. He will not expect me this morning to give a definite answer, either in the affirmative or in the negative, but I can assure him that I am fully conscious of the expressions of good will of which we have had evidences in India itself during the last few months and of which we have had many evidences during the course of our deliberations in this Conference. I can tell him that, whatever we may decide, the thing that we wish above all others is that he and his friends shall go back to India and tell every section of Indian opinion that there is opportunity for their help and that we need their help, just as we shall go out into Great Britain and tell our friends that, after the discussions of the last two years and particularly after the deliberations of the last few weeks, we believe that we can produce before the High Court of Parliament a scheme on the lines that we have been discussing that will do credit both to British and to Indian statesmanship.

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6. SPEECH DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS  
ON THE 27<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 1933, ON THE MOTION TO  
APPOINT THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE.

I beg to move,

“ That, before Parliament is asked to take a decision upon the proposals contained in Command Paper 4268, it is expedient that a Joint Select Committee of Lords and Commons, with power to call into consultation representatives of the Indian States and of British India, be appointed to consider the future government of India and, in particular, to examine and report upon the proposals in the said Command Paper.”

Truly the lot of the Secretary of State for India is a very unhappy one. Everything that he says is taken down in evidence to be used against him. If he says something to reassure his friends in England he creates suspicions in India. If he says anything to show his sympathy with Indian aspirations, immediately he disquiets many of his friends in this country. Indeed, during the last 18 months I have been trying to emulate the delicate walking of Agag, no doubt with very poor success, and attempting, I fear very clumsily, the balancing feats of a ballerina or a skating champion. To one body of people I am a tyrant, to another body a traitor. Let me give the House one or two illustrations from my recent correspondence of the truth of what I am saying. Here, for example, is an extract from a letter from a British correspondent who signs himself “ One of your former admirers ” :

“ As you are admittedly a traitor, it would be advisable for you to blow out your brains before rather than after your surrender.”

Here are one or two of the more elegant extracts from the Indian Press :

“ Everything that matters is in the pockets of Sir Samuel Hoare. Everything that does not matter will come to India.”

“ Sir Samuel Hoare is acting with the ruthlessness described as his characteristic by Mr. Churchill.”

And I would also add, as apparently great minds work together, by Mr. Gandhi as well. Particularly at the present time am I

the isolated target of a plunging fire from two flanks. Here is what some of my friends think about the White Paper. I begin with an extract or two from the British Press. This is from the "Morning Post":

"Under the disguise of all its smooth reassurances, this White Paper is in essentials not a deed of partnership, but an instrument of abdication."

Here is an extract from the "Daily Express," which will equally please my right hon. Friend the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill):

"The White Paper on India is the official hoisting of the white flag by the British Government over the Indian Empire."

But some things strike different people differently. Here, for instance, is what the Indian Press think about the White Paper:

"Responsibility offered is like a card house behind which stands a menacing giant armed with autocratic powers of a hundred Hitlers and Mussolinis."

"Had India presented a united front to the enemies of her aspirations, it is inconceivable that an offer so offensive to her patriotism and entirely galling to her self-respect could have been made."

"There is not a single point in which the White Paper has even partially conceded to the Indian point of view."

Here is my last extract, and I would draw the special attention of the House to it:

"If Churchill and the men of his group had been entrusted with the framing of the Constitution, they could not have improved on Hoare's performance"

By one side it is said that the White Paper is the white flag of surrender; on the other side it is claimed to be the red flag that flouts Indian nationalism. Amidst this diversity of tongues and, perhaps I might also say, amidst this extremity of abuse, I am inclined to comfort myself with two reflections. First of all, both these lines of criticism cannot be right. Secondly, I am able to-day to put before the House the Government's proposals, and to ask hon. Members, in whatever quarter of the House they sit, to bring their minds to bear upon them, to test them whether they are sound or whether they are not sound. To-day I do not ask the House to go any further than they have gone in the previous Indian Debates in this Parlia-

ment. I do not ask them to come to any decision upon the merits of our scheme.

On the day that I went to the India Office I realised that most of the problems with which I was faced were almost insoluble. I realised that questions connected with the Indian Constitution were certain to excite controversy in India. I realised that they were equally certain to start political controversy within the ranks of the parties at home. From the very first I realised the complexities of every one of these problems, and I tell the House to-day that I have shared the anxieties, felt, I believe, by every hon. Member of this House. Feeling these doubts, realising these difficulties, sharing these anxieties, I would say that it would be altogether unfair, it would be almost criminal, to ask the House, and indeed to ask Indian public opinion, to come to definite decisions after two or three days' Debate, after a series of speeches, however important those speeches may be, during the next few days.

It is on that ground that I am proposing to the House, the unprecedented procedure under which a Joint Select Committee of inquiry is to be set up before any decision is taken. The Government and I wish at the earliest moment to ask for the co-operation of Parliament in our difficult task, to put our proposals before them, and to ask the Committee of both Houses to give us the great value of their advice, before we ask the House to come to a final decision. That has always been the intention of the Government. As long ago as last June I described it in some detail to the House and the procedure which I propose to-day is exactly the procedure that I outlined last June. The Motion is exactly the type of Motion I have always contemplated, and it is all moonshine to suggest that the Government have, in any way, altered their general line of policy, or have in any way modified their proposals for procedure, as a result of pressure from this or that section of the House

If I know anything of the House, I guess that it does not want to-day a historical lecture or a constitutional lesson in the details of the White Paper. I propose not to deal at any length with past history, not to go into great detail over the wide field covered by the White Paper, but rather to sketch to the House the background of our proposals, and the reasons that have prompted us to make them to Parliament. As to the past, I need make only two observations, and they need not be long observations. For the best part of 100 years, ever since Macaulay with that beaming optimism which characterised

early Victorian Liberalism, declared that the English language was to be a bridge between Asia and Europe, and that, by 1860, to use his picturesque phrase, "there would not be a single heathen in India," rightly or wrongly we have led India along Western lines and made every responsible public man in India believe that Western institutions and particularly British institutions are suited to Indian development. That is a fact that we may or may not deplore, but it is a fact that we cannot ignore.

To-day, I venture to press it on the House, even more strongly than I would press upon the House any explicit pledge in an Act of Parliament. The pledges of the past leave full liberty to Parliament in the choice of the time and manner of constitutional advance. I accept this principle. Although it was Lord Curzon who with his own hand wrote the words about responsible Government into the Declaration of 1917, our hands to-day are free to take what course Parliament in its wisdom thinks proper in pursuance of that declaration. I submit that Parliament would be most unwise if it failed to take into account the continuous history of the last century and the fact that, year after year, we have led India to believe in the continuous bestowal of new instalments of constitutional progress.

When I think of these moral obligations rather than explicit pledges, I am reminded of the story in the Arabian Nights of the man who made a regular practice of giving presents to his friend. A time came when he ceased that practice and the friend complained to the court of conscience that, owing to the regularity of the gifts, he had become so habituated to these grants that there was a moral obligation on his friend to continue them. The court of conscience gave the case against the man who had made the gifts on the ground that his constant practice had created a moral obligation. Our case in India is not altogether dissimilar to the case of the man and his friend. I want to emphasise to the House, and, this is the first point to which I would direct its attention, that it would be most unjust and most unwise to ignore this long continuous history and the moral obligations, if not explicit pledges, into which, time after time, we have entered.

The only other observation I would make about the past is this. We cannot isolate these Indian questions from the whole field of Asiatic questions. India is not isolated from the rest of Asia. Hon. Members would be very unwise if they approached this question without reminding themselves of what has been happening from one end of Asia to the other in the years since

the War—if, for instance, they failed to remember what is called the new tide in China, if they failed to remember, again, the efforts which Turkey is making to establish itself as a modern progressive Power, if they failed again to remember the events of only the last few weeks in which Japan has been challenging a big body of European public opinion. What wonder when all this ferment is going on in Asia from one end of that Continent to the other that India should be raising its voice for recognition, and that India should be making a demand for a greater share in its own government.

I hope that these two observations are sufficient to show why it is that almost universally the demand is being made for great changes in the government of India. After all, the demand for change was the very *motif* of the Report of the Simon Commission. The Simon Commission made the most notable and valuable survey of Indian problems that has ever been attempted. There was not a phase of Indian life, there was not an Indian political movement, that the report did not cover in its majestic sweep, but the one conclusion that stood out above any other—I will say a word or two about the details in a later part of my speech—the one main conclusion that emerged more clearly than any other, was the acceptance of the fact that great changes are now inevitable in the government of India.

The question, therefore, which I venture to put to the House is not whether changes are necessary, though I believe that every hon. Member admits that changes are necessary, but rather what those changes should be. The Government have put their proposals in the White Paper. None of those proposals is new. Anyone who has read the proceedings of the various Round Table Conferences will agree with me that there is nothing in these proposals, nor can there be anything in these proposals, that has not been fully discussed during the last two years. They are not new proposals. They are proposals that I imagine almost everyone who has been following the Indian problem for the last two years has expected the Government to make. But before I deal with some of them, let me make an over-riding contention, or rather an over-riding test, that I would desire to see applied, not only to these proposals, but to any alternative proposals that may be made.

It is quite essential that no changes that we propose, still less any changes that Parliament enacts as the statutory law of the country, should go to weaken the Indian Executive, either in the Centre or in the Provinces. Do not think that we have been blind, we Members of the Government, to what has



been going on in the world in recent years. We have marked as clearly as any hon. Member in this House the way in which Government after Government, Constitution after Constitution, in the East as well as in the West, has foundered owing to the weakness of its executive. I believe it will be found, when hon. Members have had a fuller opportunity of investigating the details of our proposals, that we do not propose to weaken the Indian Executive, either in the Centre or in the Provinces. What we do propose is to concentrate upon the essentials and to define responsibility, and we believe that by concentrating upon the essentials and by defining responsibility we shall actually remove certain of the causes that now weaken government in India, both in the Centre and in the Provinces. Be that as it may, I would welcome the criticisms, if need be, of hon. Members upon this all-important point. We agree with every hon. Member in this House that it is essential that the Executive Government in India, both at the Centre and in the Provinces, should be a strong one. Everywhere anarchy is one of the greatest disasters in the world; in the East it is the unforgivable sin.

Let me now come to the White Paper itself, and let me at once draw the attention of the House to a point that I feel sure most hon. Members have already noted, namely, that the White Paper includes a very comprehensive scheme, a scheme that covers the whole field of Indian Government, both at the Centre and in the Provinces. There were two alternatives open to the Government. There was the alternative of making proposals that would proceed by stages, proposals that would bring into operation Provincial autonomy first and afterwards perhaps, at some indefinite time, would deal with the Centre; and there was the alternative of dealing with the whole body of the Government at once. It was not a question of ignoring or accepting the Simon Report. There were factors which we had to consider that were unknown to the Commissioners at the time that they made their report. There was the factor, for instance—to many, perhaps, a very unexpected factor—of the attitude of the Princes towards All-India Federation.

It was not then a case of ignoring the Simon recommendations. It was rather a question of weighing the advantages and disadvantages of both alternatives and of taking into account the new factors as well as the factors that guided the Statutory Commission. It was one of the most difficult questions that the Government had to decide. There were obvious advantages in each course. After very careful consideration, we came to the

view that it was both wiser and safer to make proposals that would cover the whole field, and we took that choice for two reasons. First of all, we do attach very great value to the accession of the Indian Princes to any system of Indian Government. I shall deal in a minute in somewhat greater length with the conditions of that accession, but, so far as our proposals are concerned, we attach great value to the Indian States being represented in the Central Government—the Indian States with their long and hereditary experience of government, the Indian States, who, however much they may disagree among themselves on minor issues, are at any rate unanimous on two fundamental conditions: first, their support of stable Government, and second, their determination to rest within the British Empire. The Indian States through their representatives made it clear to us that they were not prepared to enter any Government that was wholly under the control of Whitehall. If therefore we are to have this valuable support of the Indian Princes it is necessary for us to embark on comprehensive proposals that will cover the Centre as well as the Provinces.

But there was another reason that decided us to proceed by a comprehensive scheme. Being politicians, we could not be blind to the fact that political opinion in India was almost unanimous in favour of a comprehensive scheme. Being politicians, and being I believe, like every hon. Member of the House, very anxious to see political autonomy started in the Provinces, we were driven to the conclusion that there was little or no chance of Provincial autonomy starting in a reasonable atmosphere of goodwill if we did not at the same time make proposals that covered the Federal Centre. These were the reasons that prompted us to take this decision. Hon. Members may or may not agree with them, but I hope that every hon. Member will see that our reasons were not prompted by idle sentiment. They were not the reasons of theorists who wish to make up a nice neat paper scheme covering the whole field. They were the actual reasons derived from the hard facts of the situation that made us take the decision that we took.

Our scheme, therefore, as the House will see, is a comprehensive scheme covering both the Centre and the Provinces. As the House will also see, it is a very complicated scheme. I suppose that it is the most complicated scheme that has ever been proposed as the constitution of any country in the world. It bristles with complexities, it is filled with difficulties, and it is filled, no doubt, with many anomalies, but I say to the House

that if it did not bristle with difficulties, if it were merely a simple scheme that did not deal with all the difficulties, it would be a purely artificial scheme and worth nothing at all. It would be a worthless scheme for the very good reason that the Indian factors are so complex that no simple scheme could possibly deal with them. We have tried to face every one of those difficult factors and if our scheme is long, complicated and intricate, the reason is not the muddle-headedness of the Government but the complexities of the Indian problem.

Let me suggest some of the complexities which we have had to take into account. Let me suggest the main interests in this veritable jig-saw puzzle that we had to attempt to fit together. First, there is that whole body of interests that come about as the result of the long partnership between India and Great Britain. Next, there are the exclusive interests of India itself. There are the interests of the Indian Princes and of the Indian States. There are the interests of British India, and particularly the relations of the Centre to the various British Indian units; and there are the interests of the communities and religious minorities. No scheme that does not honestly face all those problems and make a serious attempt to reconcile those interests—quite often conflicting interests—is worth the paper on which it is written.

Let me suggest in broad outline the way in which we have attempted to reconcile these main interests. I begin with the main Indian interests. There our object has been to give Indians the widest possible opportunities for their own self-government and self-development. The safeguards that necessarily take so prominent a place in the White Paper are designed just as much in Indian interests as in British interests. Indeed, one of the most significant facts of the proceedings at the Round Table Conference last September was the demand of Indians themselves for safeguards. There day after day Hindus or Sikhs in the Punjab were demanding safeguards for their minority communities; Moslems were demanding safeguards in the Hindu Provinces; the Depressed Classes were demanding safeguards in their interests in Provinces where there are many members of the Depressed Classes. Take another instance — the demand reiterated by all the Indian minorities for the declaration of fundamental rights in addition to their demands for safeguards. I state these facts to-day to show that these safeguards are just as necessary, and just as strongly demanded by Indian public opinion as they are by British public opinion here.

As I say, in approaching the question of Indian interests, we have attempted to give the fullest possible scope to Indians to develop themselves on their own lines. We have tried to give the fullest possible scope to Indian aspirations, and if we have introduced safeguards, it is because we believe that those safeguards are necessary if stable government is to continue. It is said in India that the proposed transfer of responsibility to Indians amounts to little or nothing. Let Indians look at the question from the point of view of the 230,000,000 people, who live in the villages of India and make their living upon the land. Practically every single matter that affects them from day to day and year to year it is proposed to place under the direction of an Indian Minister depending upon a Legislature elected by Indians on a wide franchise, and a franchise made wider than it is now for the express purpose of giving the agricultural masses a chance to make their voices heard, for the express purpose of protecting the poorer and less influential minorities.

Let the House look at the exclusively Provincial subjects in the White Paper, all of which will be under the direction of an Indian Minister. What is the cultivator interested in? The rent he pays for his holding, the state of the roads by which he takes his produce to market, his water supplies, the watch and ward which protects him from the criminal, the education of his children, public health, the protection of his cattle from disease, the improvement of his seed, the provision of his credit—all of these things, and there are many more—there are 77 important items in the list of Provincial subjects—all of these will in future be controlled and directed by a Government responsible to himself and his fellows. Thirteen years ago—a very short time—all these things were under the control of an official Government. No such change has ever been proposed by constitutional methods in the Government of so vast a country in so short a time.

I pass from the interests of British India to the interests of the Indian States. The House will see that in the White Paper there is nothing said about the relations of the Indian Princes with the Crown. There is nothing said about those relations, for the very good reason that the broad question known by the all-embracing term of "paramountcy" does not enter into the Federal scheme at all. Princes do not enter into the Federal scheme at all, except in so far as they themselves agree to modify their treaties upon their entry into Federation. Subject to this, the treaties and agreements will express direct relations between the Princes and the Crown. As to the

Federation, the Princes will, of course, be free to enter or not as they wish. As, however, their accession in sufficient numbers is a fundamental condition of our proposals, we have to make provision that will ensure a sufficiency of the Indian States entering the Federation if we are to obtain the advantages that we desire from that accession.

The House will see that the test which we propose is the test of the entry of Indian States, representing half the population of the States, and half the States entitled to seats in the Upper Chamber. At first sight, hon. Members may think that that test is too low a test. I think if they will analyse and take into account, first of all, that there are a good many minority States, and those States cannot enter into the Federation; and, secondly, if they take into account the further fact that only the more important States will have seats as of right in the Upper Chamber, they will see that if 50 per cent of these States, representing half of the population of the Indian States actually enter the Federation, the Federation will, in practice, be an effective All-India Federation. This question is, as I say, of vital importance. The effective accession of a sufficient number of States is a fundamental condition of the whole of our proposal.

Let me pass to another factor of the Federation. Hon. Members will remember that, speaking generally, there are two types of federation. There is the federation which retains predominant power at the centre, and there is the federation which moves the balance of power to the federal units. Deliberately and designedly we have chosen the second of these types, namely, the type of federation which transfers the main balance of power to the federal units. We have made that choice for the very obvious reason that the great sub-continent of India, with all these increasingly difficult problems, is much too big and much too diverse a unit to be managed by a highly centralised Federal Government. On that account, the basis of our proposals is that for the Federal Government there should be a definitely limited field of activity confined to the specified Federal subjects, and the Federal Government should, of course, have sufficient revenue to meet its Federal obligations, and that the Provinces should be given the fullest possible field for autonomous development. I am inclined to think that one of the great advantages of a Federal scheme for India is the opportunity that it is going to give to those great Provinces, some of them—one or two of them—as populous as the United Kingdom, to develop on their own lines. I am inclined to think

that we have pushed centralisation too far—at any rate, too far in recent years in India. Centralisation was possible when problems of government were comparatively simple. Centralisation will more and more break down in India in face of those increasingly difficult Indian problems, and I should hope to see development in India very much on regional lines with some of these great Provinces working, it may be, in close association with the States which border upon them. I believe that this decentralisation may well be a proposal that will give a great body of new life to Indian development.

In any case, we have chosen deliberately and definitely the kind of Federation that gives the fullest, freest scope to the Provincial units. I know that there are several hon. Members in this House who will be saying to themselves, even while I am speaking, “That sounds a very excellent scheme. It sounds as if the Government have held the balance between British interests and Indian interests—the interests of British India and the interests of Indian India. But what guarantee is there that an extremist majority will not hold the power in the Centre and, it may be, in several of the Provinces, and smash your scheme altogether?” I do not wish to make prophecies about the future, least of all the Indian future. But I would ask hon. Members to look very carefully at the proposals which we have made in the White Paper for the constitution of the Federal Legislature and of the Provincial Legislatures, and if they analyse those proposals, I think they will agree with me that it will be almost impossible, short of a landslide, for the extremists to get control of the Federal Centre. I believe that, to put it at the lowest, it will be extremely difficult for them to get a majority even in a Province like Bengal. No doubt, there are these questions to which, rightly, the Joint Select Committee will give their careful attention. But I can say that, so far as Indian interests are concerned, we believe our proposals safeguard them, and we believe they do the fair thing between the Centre and the Provinces, and between the Centre and the Indian States.

I come now to a more difficult question, the question of the joint interests of Great Britain and India. Sometimes these are called British interests. I will not admit that they are exclusively British interests. I would never define British interests in India as being solely the interests of the British Government, or the British bondholder, or the British trader. I put a much wider interpretation upon our interests. I put so wide an interpretation on our interests in India that I claim that they are joint interests between ourselves and Indians.

After all these long years of partnership we, the Government, could not agree, and Parliament would never agree, to a repudiation of all these obligations into which we have entered for protecting the weak from the tyranny of the strong, avoiding anarchy and defending religious minorities from persecution. All these obligations I claim to be included in the general term "joint British and Indian interests." These interests are the interests that we propose to safeguard in the manner set out in the White Paper. These are the interests that are set out in great detail in the White Paper. It is much fairer, it is much more honest, to set the list of these safeguards out in full and in detail. We desire no misunderstanding about them, either here or in India. Naturally they are complicated, they must be, and they take a very prominent place in the proposals we are making.

Naturally, also, they are open to attack from both sides; they are bound to be open to attack on both flanks. The Indian says they amount to so much that the responsibility becomes a sham. The critic in this country says that no safeguards are any good at all. We often have heard these criticisms stated in the form of a dilemma. If the safeguards are effective responsibility is a sham; if responsibility is effective the safeguards are a sham. Fortunately, the world is not run on a rule-of-three of this kind. Fortunately, great affairs are not susceptible to dilemmas of that kind. If this were a true dilemma, it would mean one of two things. It would mean either that there could never be responsibility in India, or it would mean that if there were responsibility it must be responsibility without safeguards. I claim that no serious body of opinion either in this country or in India is prepared to accept either of those alternatives. I do not believe any substantial body of opinion is going to state that at no time and never can there be responsible government in India, nor do I believe that there is any substantial body of opinion either here or in India that considers that safeguards of some kind are not necessary in the interests of Indians themselves. Certainly, among the first to protest would be some of those representatives of the Indian minorities that made their voices so powerfully heard at the Round Table Conference last autumn.

Let me at this point deal with a series of arguments that we have all of us so often heard against what is called responsibility with safeguards. "Look at the Irish Treaty," say many of my hon. Friends. "What use were the paper safe-

guards in the Irish Treaty? What use was even the signature of my right hon Friend the Member for Epping? What use were those safeguards even to a great country like ours, dealing with a small country like Ireland a few score miles from our shores? If the Irish safeguards were of no avail, what is likely to happen to these Indian safeguards when we are dealing with a country not a few score miles away, but with a great Continent 6,000 miles away?" My answer is a simple one. There is no similarity whatever between the Irish and the Indian case. The Irish Treaty broke down not because of safeguards but because there were no safeguards. I do not criticise anyone who made the Treaty in the difficult conditions in which it was made, but the fact does remain that in the true sense of the word there were no safeguards included in the Irish Treaty.

Compare the Indian position with the Irish position. In India the Governor-General, the Provincial Governors and other high officials are still to be appointed by the Crown. The security Services, the executive officers of the Federal and Provincial Governments, are still to be recruited and protected by Parliament. The Army, the ultimate power in India, is to remain under the undivided control of Parliament. Those are no paper safeguards. Here are the heads of Government endowed with great powers and given, as I shall show a few minutes later in more detail, the means of carrying those powers into effect. These questions are all important, they are the key questions of the Government's proposal, and I would venture, because they are so important, to make a somewhat more detailed analysis both of the safeguards themselves and of the machinery with which they will be brought into operation.

The effect of these provisions is, broadly, this, that when in the exercise of his responsibilities, a Governor feels constrained, for example, to differ from his Ministers the orders which he issues to the Services will be no less the legal orders of the Government than if they had resulted from his Ministers' advice.

This being so, the criticism of the effectiveness of the safeguards reduces itself when examined to two propositions. The first is that the Services will blankly refuse to obey orders. I need but to state that contingency for every hon. Member to brush it aside. With the record of the Secretary of State's Services, surely there can be no suspicion that they will not carry out the accredited orders of authority. With the



Provincial Services, there, again, with their splendid record of loyalty, often in the face of difficulty and danger, I have no doubt that they will loyally carry out the orders of accredited authority. Moreover, they will have as their protection the Public Services Commissions and other means of making their complaints to the Provincial Governments. I cannot contemplate a situation arising in which the Services will refuse to carry out a Governor's orders, even if they are given at his own discretion and without the advice of his Ministers.

There is a second contingency that may be in the minds of some hon. Members. They say to themselves "How will a Governor be really able to carry these powers into effect when his Government threatens to resign and he may be left without a Government at all?" No doubt an extreme contingency of that kind might arise, but I do not believe it is so likely as some of my hon. Friends think. I do not believe that politicians in India are very different from politicians here, and I do not believe that the contingency is often going to arise in which it would be impossible for a Governor to find an alternative Government. After all, the Governor in exercising his special powers, will very likely be exercising them in the actual interests of a substantial body of the population of his own Province, for instance, one of the minorities; and I think it will be very rare in actual practice that a Governor will not have behind him a substantial body of public opinion in a political crisis of that kind. Suppose that he cannot find a Government to carry on, then his course is perfectly clear. The Constitution has broken down, and he assumes the full power of the Government, and Parliament once again becomes fully responsible here. My hon. and gallant Friend will find in our proposals a series of explicit provisions meant to deal with a situation of that kind, in which the Constitution has actually broken down and in which, once again, the Governor-General or the Governor, with Parliament behind them, assume full and undivided powers of administration.

I have stated the two contingencies that I know have been in the mind of many hon. Members and that have led them to believe that in actual practice it would never be possible to put the safeguards into operation. One of my hon. Friends says that there would be no machinery. I am afraid that I have not made myself clear. There will be a very effective machinery. The Governor's order will be the accredited order of the Government. The officers to carry out that order will be the Services, both Central and Provincial, and, in the

last resort—I hope a resort that will never come into actual being—there is the Army behind the Governor-General and the Governor, in the undivided control of Parliament. I hope that I have said enough to show that our proposals contemplate not paper safeguards, but safeguards that, if need be, can be carried into full effect. There are, however, three particular safeguards about which I ought to say a word.

But perhaps before I come to them I ought to deal with another line of argument that I have heard constantly used during the last few weeks. It is made by many public men who are well entitled to speak from their own experience. It was suggested the other day in a letter to the “Times” newspaper by so distinguished an ex-Provincial Governor as Lord Zetland. These men say: “Your safeguards may be all right on paper; your machinery may be all right, but it will need a veritable superman as Governor-General, or as Provincial Governor, ever to carry them into effect.” These criticisms deserve to be carefully weighed and to be definitely answered. Let the House therefore observe concrete facts and try to see what is likely to happen.

I take the case of the Governor-General under our proposals. As matters stand, there are 47 Central subjects, including such matters as railways, aircraft, shipping, posts and telegraphs, customs, currency, public debt, civil and criminal law, commerce, emigration and immigration, for the due administration of all of which he is responsible as the head of the Government of India, and no one with the slightest knowledge of Indian administration supposes that the Governor-General at present is a mere figurehead. He holds one of the most arduous and responsible offices in the Empire, and, besides his direct responsibility for the affairs of the central Government, he is responsible for the superintendence, direction and control of the important reserved subjects of the Provinces. On top of all that, though it is no part of his duties as laid down in the Act, there falls upon him the difficult and exacting political work involved in his relations with the two Houses of the Legislature. His responsibilities are at present overwhelming, and they are all-pervading. In future, I agree, they will be very heavy, but at any rate they will be strictly limited and defined. I have discussed this question with the Viceroy, with ex-Viceroy and with several Provincial Governors and they all take the view that, upon the whole, the responsibilities of the Governor-General will be less rather than greater in the future.

Let me now come to what I said just now about three special responsibilities, about which I want to say a word. They are the special responsibilities, imposed upon the Governor-General, of finance, for the prevention of commercial discrimination and to prevent any grave menace to the peace or tranquillity of India. Let me say a word or two, which will be short, about each of these special responsibilities, and first of all, about the special responsibility connected with finance. One of the most difficult questions that we have had to discuss has been the question connected with Indian finance, and particularly with the safeguards necessary for ensuring the stability of Indian credit. Our difficulties were made ten times worse by the financial and economic crisis through which the world has passed. In a sentence, the problem was this : On the one hand, if the Federal Government was to have any real responsibility, it was almost inevitable that there should be a transfer of the financial portfolio. On the other hand, it was equally necessary to take no action, however excellent it may be in itself, that would endanger the very foundations of Indian stability, Indian credit. The House will see, in the proposals dealing with finance, how we suggest dealing with this difficult problem, and will see set out in great detail the financial safeguards that were considered to be necessary.

We believe that, so far as we could in the very difficult circumstances confronting us, we have held the balance between these two needs, the need of transfer on the one hand and of financial stability on the other. I believe that there is no reason why any of our proposals should in any way diminish what is one of the greatest assets that the British connection has given to India, the stability of Indian credit. I deplore an attempt that seems to have been made to shake confidence in Indian stocks. In the first place, the White Paper provides for the faithful and punctual observance of India's financial obligations, and it must be obvious that it will be an essential condition of the success of the Federation, which every Indian investor will have at heart, that the credit of India should be maintained. The House will realise that something like half the debt of India has been raised in India. Lastly, the investor may rest assured that Parliament would never accept our proposals if there was justification for gloomy forecasts of India's financial future.

Let me now say a word about the commercial safeguards, namely, the safeguards designed to prevent commercial discrimination, a part of our proposals that I know excites and

rightly excites the keenest interest in business and trading circles in this country. The House will see that we are proposing to deal with the question of commercial discrimination upon the simple basis of reciprocity. Put into a single sentence, our proposals are that anything that we do for Indian traders or for Indian professional men in Great Britain, Indians should do for British traders and British professional men in India. That is the basis of our proposals for the prevention of commercial discrimination. Obviously, they make no change in what has come to be known as the Fiscal Autonomy Convention. I am one of those who believe that the commercial relations between India and Great Britain are much better settled by agreement, if they can be settled by agreement, and it is indeed a satisfactory augury that the Indian delegates at Ottawa were able to make a satisfactory agreement, at any rate on a part of the field, with the representatives of Great Britain and the rest of the Empire, and that that agreement has been ratified by a huge majority in the Indian Assembly. To-day I say no more about commercial discrimination—not that I do not regard it as quite one of the most important questions that we have to consider. I must pass to the last of the safeguards, which we propose for the prevention of any grave menace to the peace and tranquillity of India.

This safeguard immediately raises the very difficult question of the transfer of law and order to responsible Indian Governments, one of the most difficult questions that not only we had to consider, but that the Statutory Commission had to consider. On the one hand, there is the need for making Provincial autonomy real self-government, and the virtual impossibility of making Provincial autonomy real self-government if law and order are not transferred to an Indian Minister. On the other hand, there is the essential need for taking no action that will shake the morale of the police or that will endanger the Indian spirit. This was an extraordinarily difficult dilemma facing both us and the Simon Commission. We are just as conscious of the anxiety felt by many of my hon. Friends as anyone in this House; but, setting on the one side the advantages of a transfer, and on the other side the disadvantages, we came to the same conclusion at which the Simon Commission arrived, namely, that it was both safer and wiser to make this transfer.

When one comes to that decision, it necessarily follows that, if you make the transfer of law and order to a responsible

Indian Minister, you cannot withhold from his control the administration of the police. I think it goes without saying that a Home Secretary without the power to order police to this or that point would be a Home Secretary without effective powers. Therefore, it seemed to us essential, in making a transfer, to make the transfer of the police administration. When I say that, I do not on any account mean that we leave the question there, and that we provide no protection for the police against the possibility of undue influence or victimisation. Let hon. Members look at the provisions that we make in this respect in the White Paper. We do not intend, nor do Indian public men intend, that the Minister should himself interfere arbitrarily with promotion, postings and discipline. All these matters will be primarily for the executive head of the Service to deal with. The officers at the top who have been, and will continue for a time to be, appointed to the Service by the Secretary of State, will have their main conditions of service regulated by him, and will have a right of appeal to him. Deputy superintendents, that is to say, the Provincial Police Service proper, will have the protection of the Provincial Public Service Commission, and there will, we hope, be strong selection boards for appointments and promotions in the subordinate ranks. It is to such means that we look for the security of the police from deterioration.

But the morale of the police is of importance in emergencies beyond that of any other Service, and the White Paper has taken account of this. The work of the force will—let there be no doubt on the matter—be the responsibility of the Minister. If for no other reason, the Minister will be deeply concerned in its efficiency, because at every point its work will be subject to criticism. The Governor is given, as the House knows, special responsibility in case of any grave menace to the peace and tranquillity of the Province, and the Instrument of Instructions will direct him to have regard to the close relation between this responsibility and the internal administration and discipline of the force. I want to make it clear that this is not intended to imply that the Governor is to intervene in the day-to-day administration of the force, much less in its work, but is intended to enable him to secure, if need arise, that he shall be in a position to discharge the responsibilities specifically assigned to him by the Constitution. These proposals we have discussed over and over again with experienced administrators, with the Viceroy and with, I think, every Governor in India at the present time, and they are all

unanimous that, in the difficult conditions which confront us, they provide, on the whole, a sound and workable scheme, and that in any case they are much the safer and the wiser of the two alternatives to which I have just alluded.

I have dealt, I am afraid at very great length, with the main background of our proposals, and with the reasons that have prompted us to make them. I hope I have said enough, even though I may not have convinced all hon. Members of their wisdom, to show that we have at least attempted to face the facts and to ignore none of the difficulties. I think there is no ineluctable fact that we have not taken into account in making our proposals. In the words of William James, we have forged every one of our proposals

“ in the teeth of irreducible and stubborn facts ”

Many have helped us in arriving at these proposals; of Englishmen, perhaps, most of all, the members of the Statutory Commission. In all these long and difficult discussions during the last two years, we have found in the Simon Report a perfect mine of knowledge, without which it would have been impossible for us or any hon. Member in this House to see the picture as clearly as we see it to-day. Of Indians, we are particularly indebted to the members of the various Round Table Conferences, who, year after year, often in the face of great criticism in India, have come over to discuss these difficult questions with us. I am inclined to think that, when the Joint Select Committee is set up, their experience will be very much the same as ours has been. I believe that time after time they will be indebted to the Simon Commission; I believe that time after time they will be indebted to the Indians whom we hope to see taken into consultation with the British members of the Committee.

To-day I make my appeal to the moderate men of good will and common sense both in England and in India. I have often, during the last 18 months, wondered whether the task upon which I was engaged was not a hopeless one—whether it was possible to produce a scheme of government for India, and, if it was possible to produce it, whether it was likely that Parliament would pass it. That was not so much because I believe that people over here or in India are actually opposed to this or that proposal, but rather because the complexities of the problem are so great as to make it almost impossible to see a way out. Parliament here, 6,000 miles away, attempting to make a very complicated Constitution for scores of different Asiatic races and religions, and making that attempt with an

alert public opinion, both here and in India, willing and able to pick out the innumerable points for criticism, willing to negative almost every conceivable proposal ! In view of these difficulties, I have often, since I have been at the India Office, felt almost hopeless; but I have comforted myself with two reflections. First of all, try as I will to consider every possible alternative, as I have considered every possible alternative, I can at present see no better scheme. I ask my critics to-day not to be content with a mere negative to these very complicated proposals. Let them face the facts, as we have faced them, and as I have described them this afternoon, and let them produce a better, a more workable and a safer scheme.

I know that there are many who are well qualified to speak who are nervous about these proposals. There are men who have served India and the Empire well in the past and whose opinions deserve to be taken into account by every Member of this House. Let us take those opinions into account, but let us take also into account the unanimous opinion of every responsible British official in a high post in India to-day To put it at its lowest, the administrator of to-day has an equal right to be heard with the administrator of yesterday

But I have comforted myself most of all by feeling that here, particularly in Parliament, the innate good nature and common sense of the British people almost always make itself felt. As one who has been a good many years in this House, who believes, even after that long experience, in the ultimate sagacity of Parliament, as one who is convinced that the British people, if they make up their minds, can do anything, even though it looks to be impossible, I commend the proposals of the Government to the House and I ask the House to give the Government their help in setting up a strong and wise committee to test the truth of what I have urged this afternoon and to help us to frame a scheme which will take the Indian question out of the welter of party politics for a generation, which will safeguard both Indian and British interests and will unite India more strongly than ever to the British Commonwealth of Nations.

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7. SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE INDIAN POLICE  
DINNER ON THE 21<sup>ST</sup> JUNE, 1933.

*(Extract.)*

I am here tonight to congratulate the Service, British and Indian alike, upon the success that has already attended their efforts. I follow with the greatest care the developments in the struggle for law and order. Should not the whole force be proud of the fact that not a little due to their efforts, law and order are better established in India than they have been for some time past, and notorious terrorists are being captured in the particularly difficult conditions of Bengal. Time after time in these difficult months charges have been made against the action of the Police. Ninety-nine out of a hundred of these charges have been gross and unscrupulous fabrications and more than once I have exposed them upon the floor of the House of Commons. Speaking generally, it may be said that no police force has ever been faced with such difficulties as have faced the Indian Police in these recent times and no police force has ever passed through a period of trial with such flying colours.

I am indeed glad to think that your great service is now for the first time represented upon the Council of the Secretary of State, and that I have in Sir Charles Tegart one of my most valuable advisers.

I said just now that I knew well all your anxieties for the future. How could you not feel anxious with such changes being contemplated in the Government that you have been serving? Some of you feel that under a responsible Government your conditions of service will change for the worse. You fear that men who are pledged to break up the whole machine of Government will gain control of certain of the Provincial Legislatures. You fear, perhaps most of all, that Ministers will be in office who will interfere with the internal discipline of the Police and who will gradually undermine the morale upon which mainly depends your strength. These fears you have ably set out in the memorandum that you have sent to the Joint Select Committee and I am sure that every member of the Committee will agree with me when I say that they are fears that cannot be ignored. You have a right to be heard and your record entitles you to the fullest



and fairest investigation of your claims. Disabuse, therefore, your minds of any fear that your case will go by default. There is no member of the Committee who is not anxious, not only in the interests of your Service but still more in the interests of India as well, to take every possible step for ensuring the efficiency and the integrity of the Indian Police

You do not wish me tonight to discuss with you constitutional issues. You know as well as I do, or better than I do, the arguments for and against the transfer of law and order. I will only say in a sentence that the Government's proposals were only made after a long period of the most careful study and after the fullest possible consultation with the authorities in India. Inevitably we were driven to the same conclusion that was reached by the Simon Commission that Provincial autonomy cannot be real and effective if the whole field of law and order, a field that touches almost every corner of Provincial life, is withheld from the responsible Government. Again, like the Simon Commissioners we were impressed by the view that at any rate in the Provinces that are prepared to work Provincial autonomy in a reasonable spirit, the Police in the future might obtain greater support from public opinion than they could receive in their present exposed and isolated position. But in reaching these conclusions we constantly realised the need for many of the safeguards for which you are asking. Tonight, I will only mention one for I have not the time to make an exhaustive study of them. You and we attach the greatest possible importance to avoiding political interference in the internal discipline and organisation of the Police. The strength of the Police Force in India has been to a great extent due to its freedom from political and communal interference. Officers and men have been promoted on their merits, they have known that if they carried out their duty, their superiors would defend them against victimisation. If the morale of a great Service is to be maintained, this freedom from political interference must be continued. I have no hesitation in making this claim. No sensible Indian should resent it, indeed, every sensible Indian should support it. The Home Secretary would no more think of interfering in the internal discipline of the Metropolitan Police than the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police would think of dictating to the Home Secretary upon high political questions. In the interests of India just as much as in the interests of the Police every possible care must be taken to prevent the kind of political interference that exists nowhere in the world where the

Police are well administered. This is not a question of trust or distrust of Indian Ministers. I believe myself that there are many public men in India who will maintain law and order with great capacity and resolution. If I were in their place, I would myself insist upon conditions that would make it impossible for me to intervene in the day-to-day discipline of a great Service. The life of the Ministers would indeed be made intolerable if they were held to be responsible for every promotion or posting that takes place in the Force. I have only to state the two alternatives to show how greatly the India of the future will gain if the Police Force is kept free from political pressure. How this result is to be achieved is one of the prominent issues to be considered by the Joint Select Committee. Suffice it to say that the Government has already taken it gravely into account in the provisions of the White Paper and that the Committee is bound to consider very carefully the suggestions that you have made from the field of your own personal experience.



8. SPEECH DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS  
ON THE 17TH JULY, 1933, ON THE MOTION IN  
COMMITTEE TO APPROVE THE INDIA OFFICE VOTE.

*(Extract regarding the situation in India generally.)*

If I had made this speech a year ago, and still more if I had made it two years ago, I should have been compelled to give a very prominent place, perhaps the predominant place, to questions connected with law and order. I am glad to say that the state of affairs is now so much changed for the better that I no longer have to give the prominence to questions of that kind that I certainly should have given to them 12 months ago. Ask to-day any administrator, British or Indian, as to the kind of questions that chiefly interest the people among whom he is living, and I believe that almost without exception he will give this answer: "the questions that are interesting my district to-day are not questions connected with civil disobedience, or law and order, but questions connected with the general field of administration, particularly improvements in the social and economic field rather than questions in the political field." That is a very significant change for the better.

Thanks to the efforts of that great body of officials in India, British and Indian, influenced from the top by the cheerful confidence and indefatigable energy of the Viceroy and passing from one end of the administration to the other, covering the whole field of activities of that splendid Police Service, and last, but not least, backed in recent months by a growing body of public opinion expressing itself in practically every one of the Provincial Councils of India, civil disobedience has now become a matter of altogether secondary importance. To-day, therefore, I am able to leave questions connected with law and order to the end of my speech and am able to ask the attention of hon. Members to the other fields of administrative activity, in particular to certain definite achievements that have been won in the face of many difficulties in those fields of administration by the governments of India during the last 12 months.

I suppose that the three questions that most interest everybody in the world, and particularly the inhabitants of a great agricultural continent like India, are not political questions but questions connected, first, with health, secondly, with the weather and, thirdly, with the crops. I propose to say a few

words on each of these questions in relation to India's problems. I begin with the question of health. The most prominent impression that is left on the mind of anyone who travels in the East is the very low standard of health as compared with the standard of some countries in the West. An almost incredible amount of suffering and inefficiency in many of these Eastern countries is due to the low standard of health. Any efforts, therefore, that are successful in raising the standard of health redound not only to the credit of the men who make those efforts but in a special manner to the future prosperity of the country in which those efforts are made.

In India we have a very fine record in the field of health administration. I am not sure if hon. Members always realise the debt of gratitude that for many years past not only India but the whole world has owed to the pioneer work of the Indian Medical Service. Many of the most notable achievements in the field of surgery and medicine have been due to the experiments and the experiences of officers in the Indian Medical Service. During the last 12 months, in spite of many exceptional difficulties, the difficulty, for instance, of finding the funds necessary for medical research and medical administration, the record has been, on the whole, very satisfactory. Let me give the Committee two examples. A great Institute of Preventive Medicine has just been opened in Calcutta. Its foundation is due in the first instance to the beneficence of Mr. Rockefeller, and its maintenance comes within the responsibility of the Government of India. I believe that the work of this Institute is going to be of immense value in the preventive field in India in the future.

The other illustration is taken from certain experiments that have been recently made in India with a view, first, to controlling the spread of malaria and, secondly, to preventing the relapses of the patient after the patient has begun to recover. It may not be in the mind of every hon. Member that the scourge of malaria is so great in India that probably in any given year there may be as many as 10,000,000 people being treated for it. It is probably within the mark to say that between 1,000,000 and 2,000,000 people die from malaria in India every year. What an appalling scourge; and what an opportunity for the development of medical science! I am glad to be able to tell the Committee that a new drug has been discovered called atabrin, and as far as my advisers can judge it looks as though it will be most effective in preventing a relapse, which has always been the danger of malaria epidemics.

I take those two instances and I give them to the Committee—I could give them many others—to show how very active are the efforts of the Indian Medical Service in the field of health and how year after year they are meeting with the success which they deserve.

I pass to the second question which I said was always in the minds of everyone who lives in the West or the East, and particularly in the minds of people who live in a country dependent for its existence on agriculture—namely, the weather. Neither in England nor in India can we control the weather, but we can to a great extent control its effects. Take the case of India. It is within the memory of every hon. Member that India was periodically subjected to terrible famine due to drought which swept away millions of its population. I am glad to think that as a result of the work that has been carried out in the field of irrigation, that chapter is for ever ended. We cannot control droughts, but we can insure, by a system of irrigation, that the canals shall still be filled with water even in the dry seasons.

I am glad to be able to report that in this the centenary year of our irrigation programme in India we have made still further advances, about which hon. Members no doubt would like to hear the details. Work is being continued on various irrigation projects, four of which at present in hand cover an area of more than 1,000,000 acres, and by the time these various works have been completed the total area irrigated by Government works in British India will be 40,000,000 acres, nearly four times as much as it was 50 years ago and nearly 10,000,000 acres more than it was only four years ago. India will then have an irrigated area twice as large as that of any other country in the world. Water was admitted this year into the canals of the great Lloyd barrage system in Sind, and the first year's results have been satisfactory, the total area at present affected being over 1,000,000 acres. That again is another very conspicuous illustration of the beneficent work, month by month, sometimes unknown to any one here, which is being carried out by the officers of the Government of India, be they seniors at the top or juniors in the remote districts in which they live.

I come to the other question which I suggested interested everyone even more than political questions—questions connected with the crops. I am glad to be able to report that so far as the crops are concerned last season in India they were satisfactory and the prospects this year are also satisfactory. Up to date the monsoon is strong and plentiful rains are falling

over the greater part of India. Great developments take place in India. Let me give hon. Members an illustration. A great development has recently taken place in the encouragement of sugar industries in India. I am told that within a short time something like 50 sugar mills have been set up in India, and it is satisfactory to note in passing that they are finding British machinery much better adapted to their purpose than foreign machinery. As far as we can judge, India in a comparatively short time will be making the sugar that it requires for its own purposes and will no longer be dependent on the imports of sugar from foreign countries.

Perhaps the most difficult problem that faces the agricultural community in India, apart from the question of prices, and I am coming to that in a moment, is the question of land revenue and land taxation. Hon. Members will realise how serious is a problem of that kind in a country in which rents and land taxation are fixed over a long period of years, perhaps as long as 30 or 40 years, and fixed upon the assumption that the prices of agricultural produce are going to remain fairly stable. Then comes the moment when prices suddenly slump, and the agricultural worker is faced with a burden of taxation which is two or three times as heavy and the fact that prices of commodities are two or three times lower than they were three or four years ago. That is the problem which is facing the agricultural Provinces of India. Thanks chiefly to the far sighted initiative of the Provincial Governments, and particularly of certain of the Provincial Governors, a readjustment has been made to meet these very difficult conditions, and it seems to have been accepted as a fair readjustment by landlords and by tenants.

I will give the Committee the most conspicuous example of the kind of readjustment I have described. I take the case of the great agricultural Province—the United Provinces. The Government there took a very bold action and persuaded the landlords to reduce their rents by no less than  $4\frac{1}{2}$  crores. At the same time, the Government has itself reduced its land taxation by one crore, and in order to carry this readjustment into effect in the space of three months the Government had to readjust the taxation values of no less than 6,250,000 separate agricultural holdings. What an enormous task, and with what success it has been carried through! With no commotion, with the general acceptance, as I understand, both from the landlords and from the tenants, this gigantic operation has been carried through by the officials of the United Provinces

Government, and, so it seems, has laid to rest causes which a year or two ago if they had been ignored might have led to serious and even revolutionary consequences.

I come from the actual question of the crops and the weather to the other very important question—the question of prices. I suppose that no country in the world has felt the slump in agricultural prices more seriously than has India. India is one of those great tracts of the world that responds very quickly to changes in prices. When prices go up, India very quickly regains her prosperity. When prices fall, India feels seriously and acutely the slump in commodity prices. I wish I could make a more optimistic report to the Committee about prices than I can. The latest statistics up to April last show a continued decline. None the less, there are grounds for hoping that those for May and June, when they are available, will contain some indication of improvement. The reports have begun to be more encouraging, and several of the commodities in which India is interested have risen in price. Although the general tendency is one of decrease, the decrease in the case of imports into India from the United Kingdom—and I would draw the attention of hon. Members to this fact—is very small, and the proportion of the total imports coming from the United Kingdom has shown a marked increase in the last few years. In 1931, it was 28·4; in 1932, 37 per cent.; and in the first four months of the present year, it has risen to 41·4.

The Ottawa Agreement came into force only on 1st January, and its full effect is not likely to be felt for some time. Nevertheless, it is striking that the proportion of imports into India from the United Kingdom rose steadily from 37·5 in January to 45·7 in April. There has even been some improvement in imports of cotton piece goods, the figures for the first five months of 1933 being 261,000,000 yards, as compared with 237,000,000 yards in the corresponding period of 1932. The general index for India's exported articles stood in 1932 at 84, based on 100 per cent. pre-War, as compared with 151 in 1926 and 148 as recently as 1929. This change accounts for the fact that the value of imports for last year was only a little over half of the value of imports in 1928–29. It serves to show that the recovery in the price of primary commodities is the principal need of the economic situation in India to-day, and if this could be achieved, the revenues of the country would rapidly expand, and



opportunities would again present themselves for advances in all directions where national development is needed.

Lastly, before I pass from this branch of the subject, it is satisfactory to note that trade in India is more and more resuming its normal course undisturbed by political agitation. I will quote to the Committee a sentence or two from the last report of the Senior Trade Commissioner in India—a report which was issued only two months ago. These are his words :

“ There seems no doubt whatever that the political agitation and the boycott campaign has now spent itself, and is a negligible factor. On all sides one observes signs of improvement in political and racial feeling. This is undoubtedly due to the firm policy of the Government of India, and the growing realisation on the part of Indians of all classes and all shades of political thought that within the short space of a year or two their political ambitions will very largely be met.”

Whether or not every hon. Member in this Committee agrees with those concluding words—and I see that one or two of my hon. Friends seem to express some dissent—I am sure we shall all congratulate ourselves upon the fact that trade is now resuming its normal course, and is not held up by the intervention of political boycott.

Let me complete this part of the picture by a few observations in another important field of government—the field of finance. There, again, I can draw the attention of hon. Members to many evidences of very substantial improvement. Take the Budget position first of all. The revised Estimates for 1932–33 show a surplus of two crores, corresponding almost exactly to the Budget Estimates. This was achieved after allocating nearly seven crores from revenue for reduction of debt. A small surplus is budgeted for in the current year. This surplus again assumes an appropriation for the reduction of debt, and allows also of course for the restoration of half the pay cut. If this situation is compared with most other countries, the comparison is in India's favour, and when it is realised that as recently as 1931–32 there was a revenue deficit of 11½ crores, the Government of India may look back with satisfaction on the improvement that has been brought about, although this improvement has, of course, entailed high taxation and severe retrenchment.

There has been an even more striking improvement on the credit side, shown not only by the advance in the price of

Government securities in India, and by the fact that borrowing has been effected at declining rates, but also by the reduction in the disparity between the prices of Indian and British Government securities on the London market. The differences in the percentage yield of British and Indian securities at three dates, taken in 1931, 1932 and 1933, were 1·78, ·86 and ·84. That is to say, in a very short space of time the disparity has been halved. A substantial part of the improvement in the prices has of course been due to general influences, particularly cheapness of money, but those influences would not have produced such results had it not been for the increased confidence shown in the Indian financial position and the financial future of the country. The Government has been able to reap great advantage from the situation. There has been a large reduction in short-term debts both in London and in India. Since the repayment, in 1932, of £11,250,000, the balance of the 5 per cent. loan then maturing, £13,000,000 6 per cent. bonds have been repaid, the last block of these having been discharged last month. Considerable progress has also been made in the funding and conversion of the short-term rupee debt. Since June last year Rs.94 crores of Treasury bills and rupee loans maturing in the next few years have been converted into long-term securities. The amount of Treasury balances now outstanding is 18 crores compared with over 80 in September, 1931, and between 1st May and September of this year loans to the extent of 22 crores are also under repayment. I hope I have said enough to emphasise to every hon. Member in the Committee that a great change for the better has come over Indian credit and over the general financial position of India in the short space of a comparatively few months.

I come now, as I said I would come at the beginning of my speech, to questions connected with law and order. I purposely left over this part of my speech to the present point, as I regard it now as of secondary importance to the kind of questions on which I have just been commenting. Here, again, I think I can report substantial improvements since last I made a speech of this kind to the House. The improvement in the general state of feeling towards the Government was shown in particular by the way in which the Central and Provincial Legislatures passed legislation to replace the ordinances. It is also shown by the general lack of interest in the civil disobedience movement which has fallen to so low an ebb that the extension of it at the beginning of Mr. Gandhi's recent fast

made little or no practical difference. There are now, I think, one-fifth of the number of civil disobedience prisoners that there were a little more than a year ago. There are only one-tenth of the civil disobedience prisoners that there were three or four years ago. At the present moment the great majority of the Congress Committee are not in prison at all, and it is significant that even after this great reduction of numbers the general support of law and order should be daily becoming stronger and stronger. A sign of the times is the fact that in Bombay about 150 English cloth shops, which only recently were closed as a result of the boycott, are now reported to be open. A further sign of the times is the report that a few days ago large crowds assembled at towns of the Surat district, which was formerly a stronghold of civil disobedience, in which to witness the hoisting of the Union Jack on the municipal buildings by the Collector of Surat, in pursuance of a Resolution passed unanimously by the municipality.

The position of the Government is firm and clear, but on the Congress side there are divided counsels and many uncertainties. Their present embarrassment is a measure of the success of the Government. The attempt to hold a Congress meeting in Calcutta in the spring was a fiasco. The last meeting that took place in the course of last week in Poona was, it seems from all accounts, an equal fiasco. It seems that counsels were divided and that there was a great body of support within the Congress itself anxious to see an end put once and for all to the civil disobedience campaign. Summaries of the Indian Press that have been telegraphed to me show clearly that there was a strong feeling amongst the rank and file of Congress against the continuance of an unlawful and unconstitutional programme.

According to these reports—at present we have no other detailed account of the meeting—Mr. Gandhi set himself against these counsels of reason and moderation. At the beginning of his fast he had still continued to maintain a threatening attitude to the Government. I assumed that he was ill and out of touch with public opinion. Now, however, it appears that in the teeth of the opposition of many of his most trusted supporters he has declared himself in favour of a resumption of civil disobedience as a means of extorting terms from the Government. In these circumstances there is only one course open to the Government. We have said that we are not prepared to negotiate, and we shall maintain our refusal to negotiate. Once again Mr. Gandhi wishes to put himself in

the position of negotiator with the Government of India, a negotiator who carries in reserve the unconstitutional weapon of civil disobedience to back his arguments. Let me repeat that there can be no question of making a bargain with Congress as the condition of their accepting the ordinary obligations of law-abiding citizens. I will read the Viceroy's answer to Mr. Gandhi, who had requested an interview. I am sure that all reasonable people who support constitutional methods will agree with it.

“ His Excellency has directed me to say that if circumstances were different he would gladly have seen you ”—

I pause on that point. There was no question whatever of unconditionally refusing Mr. Gandhi an interview.

“ but it would seem that you are opposed to the withdrawal of civil disobedience except on conditions, and that the interview that you seek with His Excellency is for the purpose of initiating negotiations with Government regarding those conditions.

“ It also appears to have been decided that unless Congress reaches a settlement with Government as a result of these discussions civil disobedience will be resumed on 1st August. It is hardly necessary to remind you that the position of the Government is that the civil disobedience movement is wholly unconstitutional, and that there can be no compromises with it, and that Government cannot enter into any negotiations for its withdrawal.

“ On 29th April, 1932, the Secretary of State stated in the House of Commons that there can be no question of making a bargain with Congress as a condition of its co-operation. The same position has been consistently maintained by the Government in numerous subsequent statements. If Congress desires to resume its position as the constitutional party and to put an end to a movement that has caused grave injury and suffering to the country, the way is open to it, as it has always been, and it is within the power of Congress to restore peace by withdrawing on its own initiative the civil disobedience movement. As, however, Congress is not willing to take that action, an interview with His Excellency would be to no purpose.”

That telegram has the full concurrence of His Majesty's Government.

I pass finally to a very serious phase of the law and order problem, the phase of terrorism in Bengal. Terrorism in Bengal has been a shameful and devastating disease now for many years. From time to time it has lain dormant. Then it breaks out again, as it broke out again two or three years ago with redoubled virulence. It is one of the most difficult problems which the Government of India in general and the Government of Bengal in particular have to face. Difficult as it is I think that I can report to the Committee to-day definite signs of an improved condition of affairs. There was a time not so very long ago when law and order had almost ceased to exist in certain districts in Bengal, in which official Indians as well as British could not go out except at the risk of their lives, in which it had become almost impossible to obtain the information about terrorist plots without which it is impossible to deal successfully with them. About 18 months ago we reconsidered the whole position, and we determined, particularly the Government of Bengal and the officials in Bengal, to launch against terrorism a campaign that would not only hold it in check, but would go far to eradicate it altogether.

At first the Government of Bengal had to act almost exclusively under the Emergency Powers Ordinance. I am glad to think that in recent months the Provincial Council of Bengal has come out in support of the Government and has given it the necessary legislative enactments in place of the temporary Orders. It was necessary to reinforce the power of law and order. It was necessary, for instance, to draft troops into certain districts of the Presidency. It will be a matter of satisfaction, though not of surprise, to the Committee to know that the effect of the entry of troops has been almost instantaneous. Backing up the civil authority and the civil authority backing them up, their efforts have resulted in the steady restoration of law and order in some of the dangerous districts of the Province. What is equally significant is the fact that sources of information are now once again open to us, and week by week and month by month the Government of Bengal is making more and more successful progress in breaking down terrorism and in exposing the terrorist plots. During the last few weeks there have been remarkably successful achievements by the police and the military as a result of which we believe that we have now got level with this terrible threat; and with the constant and unrelenting pressure that we intend to apply now and in the future, and in the further future, whatever may be the constitutional changes in view, we believe

that we shall succeed in freeing Bengal from one of the most terrible and shameful plagues that have devastated any part of the British Empire.

So remarkable do we consider the achievements of the responsible authorities, military and civil, that as a special mark of recognition His Majesty the King has approved of the immediate conferment of the Companionship of the Order of the Indian Empire upon Mr. Arthur Sheldon Hands of the Indian Civil Service, District Magistrate of Chittagong, and Captain Thomas Ivor Stevenson, Second Battalion 8th Gurkha Rifles, Military Intelligence Officer in the Chittagong district.

I hope I have now said enough to interest hon. Members in the administration and achievements of the officials, military and civil, of the Government of India. We have all been passing through very difficult times, and they most of all, especially the junior men among them who have been living and working in remote districts, far away from contact with their own friends and ordinary associations. I believe we have all learned useful lessons in the difficult times through which we have been passing. I remember a wise observation of Emerson's :

“ Bad times have a specific value. These are occasions a good learner would not miss ”

I do not believe that we have missed the lessons of these difficult times. I believe that we have come to realise more clearly than ever the strength and the weakness of our system of Indian Government. Facing these difficulties, the officials on the spot have shown themselves true to our traditions and history and I can claim, without being either hypocritical or sanctimonious, that they have consistently and continuously been guided by a sense of moral duty. In one aspect that sense of moral duty may be thought to have been a weakness. There might have been a temptation to them and to us to follow in the way of the dictators, to smash all opposition, to give up any attempt at co-operation and ruthlessly to proceed upon the road of autocracy. That is not the line that has been taken in these difficult months by the Government of India or by any of its officials. Simultaneously with our rigid enforcement of law and order we have consistently followed the path of co-operation with our friends in India, whether it be in the field of administration or in those other fields that we cannot discuss here this afternoon. I take no credit for any of these achievements myself but I claim that the record that I have exposed to the Committee this afternoon is a fine record.

It is a well-deserved testimonial to the sincerity and integrity of purpose with which these men have faced their difficult problems. I claim that it is also a tribute to the success that has, so far, crowned their efforts. Two thousand years ago King Asoka set up, from one end of India to another, a series of columns each bearing this inscription :

“ For what do I talk. No other end than this. That I may discharge my duty to the living beings.”

That is the motto of our administration in India. Our past and present records justify it. Our future record may, if we are just and wise, still further enhance it.

## 9. ARTICLE IN "RECOVERY" DATED 13TH OCTOBER, 1933.

*(Extract regarding the trade of India.)*

Everyone is aware that India is an important country from the trade point of view. But the high degree of that importance is not always realised. Let me, therefore, start with a few striking facts. It is one of the largest areas of internal free trade in the world. There is no country with a larger population except China. When the League of Nations assesses its Member States for the purpose of contributions to its budget on the basis of economic capacity, it rates India higher than any other country except those great Powers which are entitled to permanent seats on the Council of the League. Although India is predominantly agricultural and industry is of minor importance from the point of view of internal economy, yet India ranks as one of the eight great industrial countries for the purpose of the International Labour Organisation. Judged indeed by the value of its external trade, India is surpassed only by five countries, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Canada. The volume and direction of Indian trade therefore are matters of very great interest and importance from the point of view of this country and of the world.

The external trade of India on such a scale as that indicated above is of comparatively recent growth and has expanded steadily under the influence of British rule. Leaving out of account the effects of the present slump, it has increased six-fold in the last 60 years. The conditions which have permitted and encouraged this growth are internal security, protection against disturbance from outside and especially naval protection, the unification of the country and the introduction of uniform systems of commercial law and practice, and the development of communications both within and outside the country. Providence could not have supplied a more natural economic relationship than that which has arisen between Great Britain and India in the course of history. Speaking generally, the produce of each has been complementary to, and not in competition with, that of the other. Each has been able to supply what the other stood in need of. In particular, the growth of the external trade of India has been



conditioned by the naval security and the world-wide connections which Great Britain alone was able to provide.

Great as the growth of Indian trade has been, both outward and inward, it can and will be much greater in the future. The population is growing rapidly. There has been an increase of at least 85 millions in the last 60 years. Output and consumption per head of the population, though greater than it was, is still regrettably low. But progress will continue to be made in overcoming the obstacles of ignorance and apathy and the conservatism of social and religious customs. The gradual introduction of scientific methods and the expansion of public works, such as railways, roads and irrigation, will play their part in increasing the standard of living and the productive capacity of the people. No doubt it is to be expected that the increased demand will be satisfied to a greater extent than hitherto by the growth of native industry. But on balance the economic development of the country will be reflected in a greater demand for imports. And, equally important, India will become more dependent than she has been hitherto upon her exports and upon finding an outlet for her produce in the markets of the world.

Like all countries whose commerce consists broadly in the exchange of raw commodities for manufactured articles, India has suffered ever since the War from the disequilibrium of prices between these two classes of product, and her capacity to import manufactured articles depends upon her getting a relatively better price for her own produce. In common with the rest of the world, too, India has suffered heavily from the depression of the last four years. The value of her external trade has fallen by 53 per cent. since 1929. Ordinarily, she has a favourable balance of trade which enables her to meet interest charges and other payments which fall due in this country. In the stress of the last few years, there has been a tendency in the other direction which has caused anxiety. This now seems to be corrected, and if the months of April to June this year are compared with the same period last year an adverse balance of 7 crores has been turned into a favourable balance of 6 crores and this comparison takes no account of the exports of gold which have been so great a source of strength during the crisis. Serious as the decline in her trade has been, her position is at least as good as that of most other countries, and she is relatively well placed for taking advantage of the situation when the pendulum swings back.

The main features of the trade between Great Britain and India are these : India regularly buys more from Great Britain than Great Britain buys from India, the proportion being about 3 to 2. The British proportion of Indian imports had fallen from 64 per cent. in 1913 to 39 per cent. in the three years 1929-32. There has recently been a welcome improvement. This falling off in the British share of the Indian import trade began long before the War, though it has been more marked since. It is of course, largely affected by the great advances which Japan has made in the trade in cotton goods. Turning to the other side of the picture, the percentage of Indian exports absorbed in the British market has always been smaller than the British share of Indian imports. During the five years before the War, it stood at 23 per cent. It fell to 21 per cent. in 1928, and was back to 23 per cent. in 1930. In 1931 it jumped to 28 per cent. under the influence partly, no doubt, of the "Buy Empire" campaign, and has since risen to 30 per cent., a level which appears to reflect the initial results of the British preference.

Until recently, it was felt that India had little to gain from Imperial Preference and the idea made no appeal. This was partly due to political sentiment, but largely also to the fact that, while the benefits which Great Britain stood to gain from preferences in the Indian market were clear enough, it was much less obvious that Indian produce would gain to anything like the same extent from any preference that we were able and willing to offer in the British market. But by the time the Ottawa Conference was held, the situation had altered. In the first place, the change of policy in this country enabled us to make a more attractive offer than we could have made before in regard to the commodities in which India is interested. Secondly, the economic depression and the severe competition for markets which was now being felt by agricultural countries as well as by industrial countries had created a new anxiety on the part of India to make sure of an outlet for her exportable produce. And, finally, the objection based upon political sentiment was greatly diminished by the fact that the representatives of India were in a position to carry out the instructions of the Indian Government, free from control on the part of the British Government, as to the policy best suited to the interests of the country and their recommendations were to be submitted to the Indian Legislature.



10. SPEECH DELIVERED AT OXFORD ON THE 13TH  
OCTOBER, 1933.

*(Extracts.)*

The Government's constitutional proposals for India are at present under reference to the Joint Select Committee, of which I am a member. While that is the position, I do not wish to say anything that would prejudice the findings of the Joint Select Committee or to make a partisan speech. When the Joint Select Committee reports we shall be free again to join issue with our opponents on equal terms. But meanwhile you will not expect me to make the sort of speech which is being made by those who did not see fit to join the Joint Select Committee in their arduous and responsible work.

But I cannot remain altogether silent about Indian affairs. It is legitimate and indeed necessary that I should explain the circumstances which led the Government to make the proposals they have made and that I should make known to the public what the present state of affairs in India is.

As to the reasons for which we have made our proposals for constitutional reforms, we have been guided in the main by two general considerations of which the first is this. Over a long period of time successive British Governments have held out certain definite expectations to the people of India. Since 1919 the goal has been defined as "the progressive realisation of responsible government." The line of advance is therefore marked out not by us but by previous Governments and with the concurrence of all parties. There may be those who deny that this is a suitable and practicable form of political organisation for India and who think that the progress already made in this direction has already had such unfortunate results that we should not advance further on this principle. If so, let them show the courage of their convictions and come out into the open. Let them face the logical conclusion of their views which is that we should set aside our undertakings and that we should make a fresh start on some other line. In point of fact, I know of no one holding a responsible position who does put this view forward. All profess to be willing to carry out our undertakings and to advance a certain distance further towards the prescribed goal. If that is so, the difference is not

a radical difference of principle, but a difference of opinion as to how much can be done now.

The second main consideration which led us to the formulation of our proposals is that Great Britain has certain responsibilities to discharge in India and certain interests to maintain. We have responsibilities in respect of the welfare of great classes of the Indian people and we have their interests to safeguard. We have also responsibilities towards our own people and our own interests to safeguard, pre-eminently, for example, interests of Imperial defence and interests of trade. I do not draw a sharp distinction between these classes of interests and responsibilities nor do I set one before another. Indeed I think that all merge into one great interest—that of the Indo-British partnership, which, if it has been advantageous to us, has brought equally great benefits to India. In fact, India as the modern world knows it is a product of this partnership.

For the moment I will take trade as an example of what I mean. The prosperity of this country depends in a large measure upon our trading interests in India. On the other hand, the modern trade expansion of India owes itself to British rule and British enterprise. More and more the economic interests of India depend upon external markets. More and more in these days of stress and restriction is it important to India to have access to the British market on favourable terms. The economic interests of Great Britain and India are complementary to a far greater extent than they are divergent and the only thing that can hinder the continuance of mutually beneficial trade relations is the absence of goodwill due to political discontent. The Ottawa Agreement is a clear demonstration of this. The latest indications so far as they go point to the fact that the Ottawa Agreement is proving beneficial to both countries, and it is certainly true that this Agreement would never have been reached and put into effect if the Indian representatives had not enjoyed liberty of action and if India had not felt that she was getting a square deal politically. Subject, of course, to the passing away of the present depression, the prospects of Indo-British trade are brighter than they have been for many years provided that there is no set back in the field of politics.

There are two main classes to be considered in India—(1) the propertied and educated classes, and (2) the masses of the people, most of whom are peasants. There are those who talk as if we were entirely sacrificing the interests of the masses

and handing over power to the upper classes, most of whom are both hostile to the British connection and indifferent to the interests of the mass of their fellow-citizens. This is entirely a false picture. The Government and the responsible authorities in India would not be supporting the extension of self-government if its results would be either detrimental to the interests of the masses or to the maintenance of the British connection. The Government is just as solicitous of these interests as anybody else. The Congress party is not India. There are many other interests and parties in Indian politics which require only a platform and an outlet for their political aspirations to establish their position against the Congress party in a way that has not been possible in the past.

The White Paper proposals will give a new scope and a new vitality to the sound and loyal elements in India. There are, of course, great difficulties to be overcome and great problems to be solved in connection with a partial transfer of political power in circumstances which are unique and complicated to an unparalleled degree. All these difficulties and problems the Government has realised and faced in drawing up its proposals. The White Paper is being submitted to the most searching scrutiny. So willing and anxious are we that our proposals should be tested from every point of view that I have put myself under a cross-examination which has already lasted for weeks, and by the time it is finished I may have answered as many as 10,000 questions.

Questions can be asked and criticisms made. These have their value and I certainly do not complain of them. But what is required in the end is a consistent and comprehensive and a practicable plan. What is there of this nature in the field except the White Paper? I have lately seen a sketch of a plan published in the "Morning Post," and of this I would only say firstly that we have got beyond the stage of mere sketches and secondly that it does violence to British constitutional principles almost as much as it fails to meet any of the real needs of India.

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11. SPEECH DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS  
ON THE 22ND NOVEMBER, 1933, ON THE MOTION  
TO RE-APPOINT THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE.

*(Extracts regarding Indian States, etc.)*

I come to the chief of the items about which we have heard so much this afternoon. I begin by saying that several of them are nothing more than mares' nests. My right hon. Friend the Member for Epping has really a wonderful assiduity in discovering mares' nests. Take, for instance, the Debate this afternoon and the criticisms which he raised about the chapter of questions concerning the Princes, the pressure which has been put upon them, and the financial inducements which have been held out to them with a view to attracting them to enter Federation. Let me take the second of these points first. The right hon. Gentleman—and I am giving away no confidences of the proceedings in public—was delighted the other day in the Joint Select Committee that he felt that he had made a great new discovery, namely, that under the Federation proposals what are known as tributes now paid by certain States are to be remitted. It is very curious that he should have made that discovery a fortnight ago. It is a question which we have been discussing for two or three years. Indeed, it is a question which has been discussed much longer, for it is a part of the general question of the relations between the Princes and British India which formed the main subject of the Harcourt Butler Inquiry in 1928. Since then my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy, two years ago, went to India with an expert Committee to advise the Government, both here and in India, as to the future financial relations between the Princes and British India. There was no secret about this. My right hon. Friend published his report now two years ago, and I think that upon all sides it is considered to be a very reasonable and fairly balanced document.

These tributes really are historical survivals. The greater part of them are very small sums paid by this or that State for historical reasons. For years past they have been considered by many people to be anomalies, and it was inevitable, when we were considering the issues of any future Indian constitution, that these anomalies must be taken into account. It was considered that the wise way to deal with them was as a part



of the general financial adjustments between the Centre and the Federating Units. The adjustments propose to remit in certain conditions Income Tax to the Provinces, and so it is intended to remit these tributes *pari passu* to the States—a very fair and reasonable proposal, but one which, for the most part, involves such small sums, sometimes a few hundred pounds, and sometimes even less, that on no account could it seriously be considered by any impartial investigator to be anything in the nature of a bribe to this or that State to enter a Federation. If my right hon. Friend really studies this question he will find that, as a condition of the remission of these tributes, there is also to be a withdrawal of certain immunities which we actually make to the States. I can assure my right hon. Friend that the discovery which he has made is the discovery of a mare's nest and a very old mare's nest, terribly antiquated—two or three years old—and really not worth the time and trouble he seems to have devoted to it. They will be remitted *pari passu* with the remission of the separate benefits which the States have now received in the way of immunities.

I come to the second of the charges of my right hon. Friend, namely, the pressure that we are supposed to have been putting on those Indian Princes. What a black story he suggested to the House this afternoon. This unscrupulous Secretary of State speaking with one language in India and with one language here. It seemed to me in the course of the subsequent discussion, particularly in the speech addressed to the House by the hon. Member for Bodmin (Mr. Isaac Foot), that the right hon. Gentleman himself sometimes speaks with two tongues; not one in India and one here, but one at the Albert Hall and one at the Joint Select Committee.

Let us look at this question of pressure and see to what it really amounts. I would remind my right hon. Friend that the first offer of Federation came, not from the Government here—it did not even come from the Socialist Government which he is so fond of criticising—but from the Princes themselves. No pressure was put upon them of any kind and no pressure has been put upon them since that time. They have been perfectly free to consider their advantage from every conceivable angle, and they have come to the conclusion, in the great majority of cases, that it is wise on their part to enter a Federation, if a Federation is set up, and so far from receding from that position, they have, time after time in the course of the last six months, reaffirmed clearly and definitely their

adherence to that view. The Prime Minister of Patiala, namely, the Prime Minister of the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, speaking at the Joint Select Committee, reaffirmed that view on behalf of the Chamber of Princes in the summer, and only in the last fortnight, as the right hon. Gentleman himself admitted this afternoon, the Prime Minister of Bikaner, speaking for a large number of influential Indian Princes, again affirmed that adherence; so also has the chief Minister of the Nizam of Hyderabad. Let me remind hon. Members of the words they actually used. I asked this question :

“ Would the representatives of the Princes here substantiate what Mr. Churchill has just said, namely, that the action of the Princes was due to pressure, direct or indirect, from here? ”

You could not have a clearer or simpler question than that — “ pressure, direct or indirect, from here. ”

“ Sir Manubhai N. Mehta (Prime Minister of Bikaner). ‘ We deny it absolutely, categorically, as quoted by Sir Akbar Hydari from Sir John Simon’s Report. His Highness the Maharajah of Bikaner, several months before the Round Table Conference, anticipated that there would be the only solution which was the Federal solution, and he advised his friends that Federation must be accepted. That was the only destiny for the Princes, and Federation had no fear or threat for them. Notwithstanding that, I cannot understand why it is repeatedly said that pressure is being exercised upon the Princes by the Government. ’ ”

Let me come to what Sir Akbar Hydari said :

“ May I also state that, so far from there being any pressure from the Political Department of the Government of India on the different States, in favour of Federation, I believe British India at any rate was afraid that the pressure would be exerted the other way, in tearing up Federation, and that was what I was referring to in my speech. I think that the Government of India in this matter have really . . . behaved with absolute impartiality in their Political Department as trustees of the Indian Department, as they have always been, and as advisers when advice was sought. ”

Could you have a more categorical denial by the most representative public men connected with Indian statesmanship that this unfair pressure, of which we have heard so much this afternoon, has been applied to any of the Indian Princes?

The right hon. Gentleman asked me about Hyderabad and the Berars. The position, in a sentence or two, is this. The Berars are a part of Hyderabad, under the sovereignty of the Nizam. They have been administered by British India for a considerable period of time. Obviously, supposing that the Federal scheme comes into being, the constitutional status of Berar must be defined. The conversations that have been taking place between the Government of India and the Government of the Nizam have had that objective, namely, to define the exact position that the Berars would take under a Federal Constitution.

Now I come to the other point of detail raised by my right hon. Friend—the question of the Civil and Military Station in Mysore. This, again, is a question that has been under discussion for years. It has, rightly or wrongly, stirred up a considerable amount of feeling in Mysore itself. The position is that in the middle of Mysore there is a small enclave for the British Resident and the British cantonments. Here, again, we are discussing the future of this enclave quite unconditionally, so far as the Federal Constitution goes, and I should be perfectly prepared, when the negotiations have come to an end, to make a full statement upon the subject to the House. I believe that you will find then that it has not loomed largely—as the right hon. Gentleman seemed to think—in any negotiations that have been going on about Federation at all. It is one of those questions which, whether there is a Federation or whether there is not a Federation, has got to be settled, and the sooner it is settled the better for the relations between the Government of India and the great State of Mysore.

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12. ARTICLE IN THE "CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR," DATED 14TH NOVEMBER, 1934.

*(Extract regarding Constitutional Reforms.)*

I cannot now anticipate the recommendations of the Joint Committee. But I will try to summarise the character of the problem, so that your readers may be better able to appreciate the recommendations when they are published.

Our work, for I have been a member of this Committee, is based upon a declaration made in the name of the British Government in 1917. The declaration is worth quoting. It stated that the policy of the British Government in India was "the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire" Since then, the principle of responsible government has been in partial operation in the Provinces of India, but not in the Central Government.

By the principle of responsible government we mean, of course, that executive power is placed in the hands of ministers who command a majority of votes in an elected legislature, and that, if these ministers cease to command a majority, they have to resign and make way for others whom the legislature will support.

We are aware that other countries, and the United States of America in particular, have built up democratic institutions without adopting this principle. We are aware also that some countries which had adopted this principle have recently abandoned it, at least for the time being. We ourselves, however, continue to believe in it, and Indians have learned by our example and precept to regard it as the due and natural course of their political evolution. Of course we must be guided by the lessons of practical experience. But in the developments which have so far taken place in India there is no sufficient ground on which we should be justified in departing from the principle to which we pledged ourselves in the declaration of 1917.

In its application, however, we must be careful to go no further than the political conditions of India will justify. In particular, we have to take account of the peculiarities of the country, and of the essential points of difference between

Indian conditions and those of other countries in which similar institutions have been developed. Let me suggest certain of these considerations that differentiate the Indian from the American and European constitutional problems.

India, I need hardly say, is a very large country with an immense population. Under an autocratic system of government a large degree of centralisation was possible. With the growth of Parliamentary institutions much more devolution from the Centre to the Provinces is inevitable. Moreover, while there is a small element of highly educated and politically conscious people amongst the population, the great majority of the inhabitants have no comprehension of the larger questions which affect the country as a whole. There is, therefore, the dual problem of creating representative institutions to suit the needs of vast masses of people at a low level of political development, and of insuring that such transfer of power as takes place is not merely a transfer from a bureaucracy to an oligarchy.

Secondly, India consists not only of the British Indian Provinces, in which representative institutions have existed for a considerable time, and in which the system of responsible self-government has already been partially introduced, but also of the Indian States, which, though under the suzerainty of the British Crown, retain under their treaties and engagements varying degrees of independence, practically amounting in some cases to complete internal sovereignty. The suzerainty of the Crown has hitherto served to secure a sufficient degree of uniformity between the States and British India in essential matters concerning the whole of India. But if this uniformity is to be placed upon a secure and satisfactory basis for the future, a constitution must be devised in which autocratically governed States and democratic Provinces can collaborate in matters of common interest. For that reason alone, an Indian Federation will be unlike any other federation.

Thirdly, there is what is known as the communal problem. India is split up into several mutually exclusive religious communities (of which the Hindus and the Muslims are the greatest), and religious differences extend through the whole political, social and economic system in a way that can only be appreciated by those who possess direct personal knowledge.

I have no space in which to develop this consideration, but it is necessary to emphasise its importance because I imagine that it is the most difficult of all the factors in the Indian situation for people in other countries to appreciate. I think,

moreover, that the Hindu point of view is better understood in foreign countries than that of the Muslims and other minorities.

The anxiety of the minorities to have their rights and interests safeguarded has undeniably increased with the closer approach of self-government. This factor accounts for many of the complications and anomalies which will have to find a place in the new Indian Constitution. Nationalism is undoubtedly a potent force in India; but, when concrete rather than abstract questions are involved, the Nationalist outlook is profoundly affected by communal considerations. The lack of confidence between the communities does much to impede the progress of India toward self-government as we understand it.

There are admittedly many important spheres in which India is ready for an extension of self-government. None the less, if the guiding hand of Great Britain is withdrawn too far and too soon, the result will be disunion and confusion, a disaster for India herself and a danger to the rest of the world. The unity of India never existed before the advent of British rule. It still to a great extent depends upon it. The British connection created the financial credit of India. The British Government established the rule of law. Neither of these great assets would be safe unless British experience and authority are retained for some time longer as an ultimate reserve for difficult times.

Finally, the responsibility for defence cannot pass into Indian hands as long as India is dependent for its safety upon forces which include a large proportion of the British Army, the ultimate control of which the British Government and Parliament are bound to retain.

That a Federation of all India—that is to say, of British India and the Indian States—is the only logical means of meeting the requirements of the case is accepted by everyone. But it will be a Federation unlike other federations, not only in its institutions, but also in the manner of its creation. It will rest with the Indian States to enter the Federation individually of their own free will, and upon their readiness to do so the coming into being of the Federation must depend. So far as British India is concerned the Federation will derive its origin and its authority entirely from the Parliament of Great Britain. It will not be the result of an agreement between individual units already possessing independent sovereign powers and wishing to combine for certain common purposes.

Some, though ready to concede an advance in the Provincial sphere, would not proceed to the consummation of the Federation at this juncture, and others would be ready to go to great lengths in meeting the claims of the politically conscious classes in India. In any event, at whatever point the balance may finally be struck, the result will be a very substantial development of self-government. Affecting as it does the political organisation of a population which amounts to a fifth of the human race, so great a change will have repercussions not only in India and the British Empire but throughout the whole world.

13. SPEECH DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS  
ON THE 10TH DECEMBER, 1934, ON THE MOTION TO  
ACCEPT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JOINT  
SELECT COMMITTEE.

I beg to move,

“ That this House accepts the recommendations of the Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform as the basis for the revision of the Indian Constitution and considers it expedient that a Bill should be introduced on the general lines of the Report.”

The Report which I have moved is by no means the first of its kind that has come before this House. A century and a half ago there was a similar Debate on the Report of a Joint Select Committee on the Government of India. A right hon Gentleman—I think he must have been the prototype of my right hon. Friend the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill)—accused the Committee of “ prejudice and preconceived opinions.”

It was Edmund Burke, who replied to the accusation in these words :—

“ Their conduct has been an instance of the most extraordinary perseverance and the most steady and patient assiduity that perhaps ever had occurred.”

A century and a half has passed since Burke used those words of that Joint Select Committee on the Government of India, yet such is the strength of our Parliamentary traditions and of our feelings of Parliamentary public service, that no better words than those can be used to-day to describe the Report we have to consider this afternoon. “ Their conduct and assiduity ”—I do not include Members of the Government ; it is part of their official work ; I am thinking rather of those other Members of this House fully engaged with other work who for almost two years devoted their time, energy and abilities to this long and often thankless task.

“ Their conduct has been an instance of the most extraordinary perseverance and the most steady and patient assiduity that perhaps ever has occurred.”

When Parliamentary institutions are under a cloud in many countries in the world and when constitutions at the present time are often dictated by ruthless autocrats, Parliament should be proud of its Members of all three parties—Conservative,



Labour and Liberal—for their attempt to build up, in consultation with representative public men of India and Burma, a constitution by agreement and free discussion.

In the course of the eighteenth century debate Burke made another observation which is not inapplicable to our present discussion. He described himself as

“ a Member of Parliament who has supplied a mediocrity of talents by the extreme of diligence and who has thought himself obliged by the research of years to wind himself into the inmost recesses and labyrinths of Indian detail ”

Could you find a better description, not so much of the great Parliamentary Edmund Burke, but of a much humbler individual who is now Secretary of State for India—“ a Member who has supplied a mediocrity of talents by the extreme of diligence and who has thought himself obliged by the research of years to wind himself into the inmost recesses and labyrinths of the Indian detail ”

I will make the confession to the House that, in opening this Debate to-day, I am almost overwhelmed by two difficulties. How can I deal with this immense subject without avoiding the dilemma of vague generalisations, on the one hand, or such great detail, on the other, as to weary the House and take up excessive time for one particular speaker? How, again, can I, in my attempt to make clear to the House the strength and the stability of the constitution that is being proposed, avoid being misunderstood in India and the impression being created that the self-government we are offering to India is nothing more than a sham and a delusion?

It took me 19 days in the witness box in the Select Committee and many thousands of questions to explain the details of this complicated scheme to the Members of the Committee. If I made a similar attempt to-day, not a Member would be left to listen to me in this House. Perhaps the best course for me to take is the simplest course, to avoid detail and to concentrate upon the main features of the scheme, and not in any way to shirk the difficulties, particularly connected with the reservation and the safeguards, and to make an appeal to men of good will in this House and in India to take the scheme as a whole and to believe that it is the intention of the Committee, and of the Government in supporting the Report of the Committee, to offer to India the widest opportunities for self-government and to propose to this House a scheme which we believe will help

to keep India for all time a partner with Great Britain in the Empire, and a scheme which, at the same time, as the Committee and we believe, contains in it the seeds for wide extension and development in the future.

From the hundreds of meetings held by the Committee, the volumes of the evidence that they have received, the mass of memoranda that they discussed, and the long discussions that they held with public men from India and Burma, there emerge three broad conclusions—Provincial autonomy, All-India Federation, and responsibility with safeguards. It may be thought, to judge from the observations of some of our critics, that those conclusions came on the brain wave of a party of constitutional theorists. When they first came to the fore there was a Socialist Government in office. Has it not then been asked: Are they not the conclusions of theorists, defeatists and revolutionaries? It mattered not what Government was in office four years ago. It matters not what Government is in office to-day. Those broad conclusions came, not from theorists, not from constitution mongers, but from the stubborn and irreducible facts of the problem. They came from a century and a half of British teaching in India. They came from a century and a half of Indian experience. Politically, Indian public men have for generations been taught to work upon the Westminster model. Socially, Indian questions, such as the question of child marriage, of temple entry and of the Depressed Classes, have been thrusting themselves more and more upon public attention, and more and more it became clear that these questions could only be dealt with effectively by responsible Indian politicians. Economically, better communications and higher tariffs had made it inevitable that the India of the Indian States should take a direct part in the Central Indian Government. These broad conclusions emerged from this long chain of what I have just called “stubborn and irreducible facts.”

It was not the Committee that lightly and irresponsibly created the problem. The problem was there already, increasing in perplexity and increasing also in risk every year. If, indeed, there was a change between the more recent years and the years of past history it was that a more alert public opinion was constantly bringing these facts into greater prominence.

“Public opinion is growing all the while, is articulate, is daily becoming more powerful, cannot be ignored. What is the origin of the mistake sometimes made in Great

Britain? It is that men are standing still with their eyes shut, and do not see the movement here in India."

Those are not the words of Lord Halifax, speaking to Mr. Gandhi, they are the words of Lord Curzon, spoken more than 30 years ago. The overwhelming weight of these facts drove the Committee to reach the broad conclusions that I have just enumerated.

First of all, Provincial autonomy. If it were only an administrative problem, the time was overdue to make a further step upon the road of decentralisation. The old Central Government of India was adequate so long as the problems of government were comparatively simple. As, however, they became more complex, as political opinion grew up in the great Provinces, so more and more it became inevitable that this step forward should be taken on the road of decentralisation. On the political side, I think it has been admitted by almost everyone who has studied the problem impartially that the reforms made under the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme had outlasted their usefulness.

For both these reasons, it was necessary to take a step forward on the road to Provincial autonomy. Provincial autonomy may mean one of two things. It may mean a kind of glorified county council government, under which the Centre still maintains a considerable measure of control over the Provinces, under which the Centre makes grants-in-aid to the Provinces, and under which the Centre is ready to intervene when things are going wrong with the Provinces. That is not the conception of provincial autonomy supported by the majority of the Joint Select Committee. I believe myself that such a type of provincial autonomy in India, in a country as great as India, with all its multiplicity of conditions, is totally impracticable. Any system of grants-in-aid and inspection from the Centre will not work. Lord Curzon tried it a generation ago. Even Lord Curzon, with his great driving force and his great administrative ability, failed to make it work.

The only wise form of Provincial autonomy is real Provincial autonomy, a form of Provincial autonomy in which the field of Provincial activities is clearly marked out, and in which field the Provinces are free from interference from the Centre; a form of Provincial autonomy that is broadly based upon a wide franchise, in which the agricultural classes, the women and the Depressed Classes can make their voices heard; a system of Provincial autonomy that is not dependent upon grants-in-aid from the Centre, but subsists upon definitely allocated

taxes. That is the system of Provincial autonomy recommended by the majority of the Committee. The House will see at once that it is inevitable that in any system of real Provincial autonomy of that kind, in which Indian Ministers are to be truly responsible for Provincial affairs, it is essential and inevitable that law and order should not be reserved, but should be transferred to the responsible Indian Ministers. The House will see set out in detail both in the Report of the Statutory Commission and in the Report of the Joint Select Committee arguments that make inevitable the transfer of law and order. I will not at this point in my speech delay to repeat them. I will, however, in a minute or two refer to them when I come to deal with the safeguards, the special provisions that are proposed by the majority of the Committee for safeguarding the preservation of peace. Let me only at this point summarise what I have just said, namely, that the first broad conclusion is the conclusion of Provincial autonomy, and, if it is a real Provincial autonomy, it must contain within it the responsibility for law and order.

I come to the second of the broad conclusions of the Committee, a conclusion, in my view, as inevitable as the conclusion of the Provincial autonomy—the conclusion of All-India Federation. If you set up these great and responsible Provincial Governments, and you leave the Centre as it is now, you are running the risk of destroying one of the greatest works of the British Raj in India, the unity of India, and you are running the risk of breaking India into fragments. Secondly, you will leave at the Centre a Government unsupported by any substantial measure of public opinion, at the mercy of the Governments of great Provinces with an alert body of Provincial opinion behind them. What will be the effect of such a situation upon the two main functions of the Central Government—the maintenance of Indian credit and the maintenance of Indian defence? What, again, will be the result of such a state of affairs on the Indian Princes and the Indian States when they see around them these great Provincial Governments gaining strength at the expense of the Centre, and they themselves pushed more and more into a position of defenceless isolation?

I believe that it is only necessary to state those questions to show to the House that, if once you accept the broad recommendation of effective Provincial autonomy, the inevitable consequence is All-India Federation. But there is another conclusion to which we are driven. If there is to be an All-India Federation, it must be a Federation with a government

responsible to an Indian Federal legislature. I can explain the position in a sentence. There can be no All-India Federation without the effective accession of a substantial number of Indian Princes. An All-India Federation without the accession of the Princes is a contradiction in terms. You cannot persuade the Princes to accede to any Federation which still remains under the control of Whitehall government. They have stated over and over again that the only kind of Federation which they will join is a Federation in which the Indian executive is responsible to the Indian legislature. It follows, therefore, that if there is to be an All-India Federation in any conditions that we can contemplate, that Federation must be a Federation with responsible government. Moreover, it must also be a Federation containing units which are divergent and differing one from the other.

You might have imagined, from some of the criticisms we have heard, that no Federation is possible unless there is a neat and exact uniformity running through all the units. Historically that is not correct. There have been federations in which the units have been diverse to a remarkable degree. There was the Federation of the old German Empire—a Federation that remained in being for more than half a century, a Federation in which there were great autocracies, small city States and bureaucratic Governments, and in which there was every kind of disparity in the treatment of the various units. Indeed, in one of the greatest units, the kingdom of Bavaria, although excise and customs were Federal subjects, Bavaria insisted on retaining the taxation of its beer before it entered the Federation. But, apart from the historical argument, the criticism surely goes much further than its authors intend. If there can be no Federation in which there is not uniformity in India, you are driven to one of two conclusions: Either you have to insist upon uniformity—that is, I suppose, democratising the States, and I should have thought there was nothing further from the minds of the critics who use these arguments or your criticism is a criticism not against Federation now, in 1934, but a criticism against Federation in India at any time and under any conditions. The fact is that it is inevitable that in any All-India Federation there must be these diverse elements, and, speaking for myself, I see great advantage in avoiding uniformity and in having this kind of disparity. Be that as it may, there is the second broad conclusion of the majority of the Committee of responsible All-India Federation composed of all types of units.

But their conclusion does not end at this point. The third of their conclusions is the conclusion that may roughly

be described as responsibility with safeguards. I think that there, again, their conclusion has arisen directly from the study of the concrete facts. It has become clear to almost everyone who has impartially considered this problem that it is essential that if Provincial autonomy and All-India Federation are to work successfully, certain precautions must be taken to ensure the security and the stability of the various Governments. These precautions are not the creation of theorists who wish to set up a system of checks and balances. These precautions are inherent in the actual facts. They are not intended to impede the organic development of the Constitution. Least of all are they cunningly devised to take away with one hand what we are giving with the other. In every case they are the direct result of the hard pressure of the existing facts and conditions in India.

Let me give the House an illustration or two of what I mean. There are three types of these precautions. In the first place, there are a number of precautions which deal with the working of the executives and the legislatures. Hon. Members will see, if they study these provisions, that they set out in precise form conventions, habits and Parliamentary practices that have grown up here in the course of many generations. The Committee rightly felt that if a constitution is being set up in India upon the general lines of the British Constitution, the constitution could not possibly work if there were not contained in it these conventions, habits and practices without which the British Constitution here could not possibly work at all. Accordingly, the Committee rightly laid stress upon giving statutory form to a number of these conventions. And in making those recommendations it is worth noting that the Committee followed definitely on the lines of the creators of the British North America Act.

Secondly, there are what are called the reserved departments, notably the reserved department of defence. Here, again, this reservation arises from no wish to deprive Indians of responsibility to which they are entitled. It arises from the actual facts of the case. As things are now, India is not in a position to defend itself.\* A great part of the defence of India is dependent on British Imperial troops. Nobody I know has ever seriously suggested that it would be possible to bring the control of Imperial troops under any authority but the authority of the Imperial Parliament. That being so, it is essential, in the present conditions, to keep the defence of India under the control of the Imperial Parliament. That does not mean that we do not look sympathetically upon the great experiment

of Indianisation. I do not think that anyone can say that the present Government of India or the present Commander-in-Chief are not fully in sympathy with that experiment, and are doing their best to make it successful, but, as things are now it is essential, the facts being as I have stated, that the Army should remain under the direct control of the Imperial Parliament.

Thirdly, there are the class of reservations and precautions known as special responsibilities. Here again every one of the special responsibilities arises out of the actual facts and conditions of the Indian situation. They do not come out of the minds of theorists; they arise directly out of the Indian problem, and it is worth noting that they are as much, if not more, in Indian interests as they are in British interests. They give to the Governor-General and the Provincial Governors the right to intervene, acting on their own discretion and not on the advice of Indian Ministers, that is to say, as the agents exclusively of the Imperial Parliament in certain specified conditions. These conditions are explicitly set out in the report of the Committee. Let me give the House an instance or two as an illustration. There are special responsibilities enabling the Governors to intervene in the case of the persecution of minorities. That does not mean that we think it likely that Indian Ministers will persecute minorities, but it means that we have powers in reserve to meet a case of that kind, although it may be remote. It is interesting to note that those who have most demanded a special responsibility of this kind have been the representatives of the Indian minorities themselves in India. Again, with the backward districts and the aboriginal tribes, there, I am quite sure, every hon. Member will agree that we must keep in reserve powers to prevent these tribes and these remote districts being exploited.

Lastly, there is the field of special responsibilities connected with the various obligations which have grown up as the result of British partnership with India. I think that we are fully justified, after a century and a half of this partnership, to insist that although the occasions for intervention may be rare—we hope they will be very rare—there must be in reserve powers in the hands of the Governor-General and the Governors of the Provinces to intervene if a threat is made in this particular field. Particularly is this the case with the police. I am certain that no House of Commons, however it is composed, would pass any India Constitution Act that did not, so far as it was possible, safeguard the morale and discipline of

that splendid force the Indian Police, and I agree that every impartial Indian would also desire that nothing should be done that might undermine the morale or endanger the organisation of that force.

The problem which was presented to the Committee was this. Assume that the transfer of law and order is an essential part of Provincial autonomy, is it possible within that transfer to safeguard the police force itself from the danger of its morale being undermined and the sources of its information being dried up? The House will see in the Report the proposals which the Committee make to avoid these dangers. Speaking generally, they take the form of making precise the conventions which actually exist in this country. Here, in Great Britain, no one will suggest that the Home Secretary is not responsible for the maintenance of law and order, and yet no one will imagine that the Home Secretary would interfere with the postings and promotions within the police force itself. No one would contemplate the Home Secretary asking for the names of secret agents and the exact sources of secret intelligence. It is proposed to make precise and statutory these British conventions, without which here in England it would be impossible to maintain the morale, discipline and organisation of the police force. I am glad to believe that the police in India, when they study these provisions, will be greatly reassured. I think they go a long way to remove the anxieties that have been rife in the minds of many police officers in India, and that they wisely hold the balance between the responsibility of the Minister on the one hand for law and order and the safeguarding of the internal morale and discipline of the police force on the other.

So also with the Committee's proposals to deal with terrorism. I am not surprised that the Committee has made special and specific proposals for arming the Governor-General and the Governors with special powers to deal with this terrible evil. I gave the Committee a statement in which was set out in great detail the whole history of terrorism in India for many years past. I wished the Committee to be in full possession of all the details of this black and terrible chapter. Provided with this information, the Committee recommend, not that a particular section of intelligence should be reserved to the Provincial Governors or to the Governor-General—that precaution might be totally inadequate in the circumstances—but that where a serious emergency had arisen the Governor in the Province, acting with



the sanction of the Secretary of State and the Imperial Parliament, would be entitled to retain in his hands, or to resume into his hands, any Department of Government he thought necessary for the purpose of combating terrorism. These are extensive provisions, I believe they are necessary provisions, and that nothing short of them is adequate in the circumstances. None the less I do not contemplate that except in exceptional circumstances their use will be required. Normally we shall find Indian public men as anxious to eradicate terrorism from the life of India as any Provincial Governor or any Governor-General. None the less it is necessary in the circumstances, and, in view of the facts which I have set out in the memorandum which forms part of one of the volumes of the Report, to arm the Governor-General and the Provincial Governors with these reserve powers.

It may be said that reserve powers of this kind are nothing more than paper powers, that they have no sanction behind them, and in time of stress will be of no use or value. Nothing is further from the case. Behind these powers will be, first of all, the Governor-General and the Provincial Governors, appointed by the Crown, and kept fully informed by their Ministers and their officials of everything that is taking place. The Services are behind them, as the executive to carry out the Governor's orders; and the only valid orders are the orders of the Governor-General and the Provincial Governors. Is it suggested that the Services, with their long traditions of courage and loyalty, will not carry out the executive order of the Governor-General and the Provincial Governor? I cannot contemplate such a contingency, and, if such a contingency did arise, it would mean the breakdown of the constitution and the abrogation of all these powers. How different from the case about which we have heard so much during the course of this controversy—the Irish case: the Governor-General in Ireland appointed on the recommendations of the Irish Government, left with no powers, no Services, on which to depend for executive action. We have withdrawn the Services from Ireland. We have kept no Army there, as the last and ultimate resource in time of crisis. It is only necessary to state the two cases in a sentence or two to show how the Irish case, so far from being an analogy to the Indian case, is a direct contrast and antithesis.

No, Sir; these safeguards are not paper safeguards. They are safeguards with sanction behind them and with effective executive action to be put into effect if need arises. I have

emphasised their efficacy to the House, but I do not wish any hon. Member to think that the Committee or the Government contemplate that there will be constant need for their use. I believe that the very existence of these powers in reserve will make it unnecessary nine times out of ten to bring them into play at all. I believe that the Governors, who will be in close contact with their Ministers, when they see the case arising in which one of these special responsibilities may be endangered, will persuade their Ministers to take the necessary action, and in nine cases out of ten the Indian Ministers will be only too glad to take that advice and to take that action. It is only for the emergency cases that we contemplate there will be need for this intervention. If, however, the need does arise, there will be the powers and there will be the effective executive action behind them. So far from thinking that these safeguards will be an obstacle in the way of the development of self-government in India, I believe that they are the necessary support without which self-government in India cannot succeed.

I come now to two further questions, two questions that I am sure are in the minds of many hon. Members. It may be that I have carried, at any rate, some of them with my argument up to this point. None the less, they may say to me: "These arguments sound strong arguments, but what reason have we to suppose that this complicated Constitution will actually work? What reason have we to suppose that any substantial body of Indian public men are prepared to work it?" First of all, will it work? I am not going to be so foolish as to make any optimistic prophecies. I expect that we shall all find many difficulties, some of them unforeseen. I feel sure that we shall suffer many disappointments. I think that very likely the development of the Constitution may not be upon the lines of the Westminster model, but that it may develop on distinctive lines of its own. None the less I believe that if a Bill is passed on the general lines of the Report of the Committee, the Constitution will work. I am supported in that view by the opinion of the Governor-General, the Government of India and all the Provincial Governments. In the course of the last three weeks I have put this question to each of them. One and all they say that in their view, admitting all the difficulties and uncertainties, they believe that the scheme of the Joint Select Committee is a workable basis for an Indian Constitution.

Secondly, is there a substantial body of public men in India who are prepared to work the Constitution? I am pain-

fully aware of the fact that few, if any, Indian public men can say that they are satisfied with this or any other scheme. Safeguards and precautions which we here think necessary and without which no Bill can pass through this House, seem irksome and hampering to most Indian public men. I know also that in the recent elections which took place for the Indian Assembly, Congress, upon a programme of hostility to these proposals, won very many seats. I know also that many of my Indian friends with whom I worked during the last three or four years, have been defeated. They fell, let me say in passing, in the honourable cause of co-operation and reconciliation. These events did not come to me as a surprise. I knew Congress would win many seats in this election. None the less the Viceroy and I were so anxious to bring Congress back from the barren field of non-co-operation into the field of responsible public work, that we were prepared to face the risk.

If I draw a lesson from the recent elections, it is that so long as the present system continues, under which electoral success depends almost exclusively upon attacking the Government—there is this difference between attacking the Government in India and attacking the Government here, that the Government of India, being a bureaucracy makes no response on the platform or in the country—the elections in India will almost invariably go the way of the elections that have just taken place. I know also that subsequently Congress has passed a resolution hostile to the Report. I hope that on second thoughts they will reconsider their position. I should have thought that the day of antiquated negation, whether in this country or India, was passed. I should have thought that there were great bodies of opinion in India whose one desire is to avoid further delay and to reach at no distant date definite decisions upon a constitutional scheme. Any proposal for a constituent Assembly in India seems to me quite impracticable, and I believe that Indians themselves know it to be impracticable. I believe that the time has come to bring to an end this long period of protracted delay, and to take definite action upon the one scheme that holds the ground and to which there has been proposed no workable alternative.

May I say this word of appeal to my Indian friends in India? During the last three years I have had a better opportunity of meeting Indians and discussing with them these questions by word of mouth than any previous Secretary of State. I think that during all these long discussions, even

though we may not always have agreed with each other, we have become better able to understand each other's difficulties. They took some risks in co-operating with us in London. Perhaps in a small way I took some risks in maintaining steadily now for three years past the path of constitutional reform. But be that as it may, let me put, if I may say as a friend, the position as I see it. I do not believe that it is a choice between a Bill founded upon the broad lines of the Committee's Report and a more advanced Bill at any near future date. I know, perhaps better than most people, the weight of exacting work, the thanklessness of the task that has gone to the framing of this scheme. I do not see, within any reasonable compass of time, any other Government, Conservative, Labour or Liberal, giving the time and the trouble and incurring the unpopularity in this country of introducing another scheme.

If my forecast be right, it means that if no Bill passes this Session there will be no comprehensive India Bill for many years to come. I am quite sure that the inevitable result of such a state of affairs would be to drive the problem of Indian constitutional reform into the hands of the extreme Right and extreme Left. That would develop into a battle between the extreme Right and the extreme Left, and the creation of such an atmosphere as to make impossible, if not for all time at any rate for many years, the reconciliation of differences between the two peoples.

Let Indians mark what they have been offered in this scheme. They are being offered, as the basis of the Indian Constitution, the three essential principles for which every Indian who has been in consultation with us has asked—Provincial autonomy, All-India Federation, and Provincial autonomy and All-India Federation brought about in a comprehensive scheme and not taken stage by stage and chapter by chapter. Further than that they are being offered a scheme which, if they will examine it, they will find to contain in every chapter the seeds of future growth. I venture to appeal to my friends in British India to mark these great advances. They are not mere paper promises. They are made by a Government with a majority behind it and a Government determined to carry its promises into effect without delay and in the course of this Session.

There is a word which I would venture to say to my friends in the Indian States. I am convinced that no form of future government in India can be complete without the participation

of the Indian Princes and the Indian States. It was the Indian Princes who made the offer of federation four years ago, and it was the British Indians at that time who received that offer in the spirit in which it was made. I am glad to think that there is a chance of having the advantage in the government of India of the forces of stability, the hereditary knowledge of government, and the traditions which the Princes can bring to it. I have no reason to suppose that the Princes have in any way altered their position since they made that offer four years ago. Neither they nor I will be deflected by partisan propaganda. They are free agents. Let them study the Report and I believe they will find that their claims, their rightful claims, have been met in the letter and the spirit and that there is no reason why they should not without delay take a great opportunity that may never recur of establishing their rightful position in the central government of India.

I have been drawn away—and I am obliged to the House for allowing me to make this digression—into saying a word or two to my Indian friends in British India and the Indian States. Let me, however, remember that I am addressing the House of Commons and that I am asking hon. Members to pass by an overwhelming majority the Resolution in my name, which will enable the Government to proceed without undue delay with a Bill upon the lines of the Committee's Report. If Great Britain were weak, if our prestige were low in the world, I would not be standing here to-day asking this House to approve of any changes in India. It is only when a country is strong and when a Government is stable, that it can afford to make constitutional reforms.

We propose these constitutional reforms on their merits, not because we have been driven into making concessions by weakness, timidity or vacillation. We propose them because we believe them to be for the better government of India. We propose them because we believe, not only that they are in full accord with the British traditions of the past, but because we believe that they will help to keep India a contented partner with Great Britain in the British Empire. We propose them because we believe that they have behind them the greatest measure of agreement that has been achieved either in India or in this country for any constitutional proposals, because no one, British or Indian, has proposed a workable alternative. We propose them because we believe that the differences between Great Britain and India are not yet irreconcilable, but that, if we do not adjust our relations to

modern conditions, those differences will drag us further and further apart.

It is in this spirit that I ask the House to pass this Resolution and to pass it with an overwhelming majority. I believe that if they pass it with an overwhelming majority it will be said that the action of the Imperial Parliament is yet another instance of British wisdom, British foresight and British common sense. Let it be said of this Parliament as it was said of the Members of Parliament who more than two centuries ago did so much to strengthen the foundation of the British Constitution :

“ They were not dreary pedants. They were statesmen accustomed to the management of great affairs. Their plans of reform were not so extensive as those of the law-givers of Cadiz, but what they planned that they effected ; and what they effected, that they maintained against the fiercest critics at home and abroad.”



#### 14. BROADCAST TALK DELIVERED ON THE 1st JANUARY, 1935, REGARDING CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS.

Both Houses of Parliament have held great debates on the future of Indian government. By a majority of more than three to one in the House of Commons and nearly four to one in the House of Lords they have supported the recommendations of their own Joint Select Committee. Mr. Lansbury and Mr. Churchill found themselves in one lobby: in the other were the great majority of Members who wish to take the middle road between the left and the right. Neither weariness, weakness nor a desire for compromise have influenced their choice. They have taken it because they believe it to be the safest road and the only way that can be held to the journey's end.

This is the road recommended by almost all the men who are best qualified to know the way.

The surviving members of the Simon Commission, many experienced Indians at the Round Table Conferences, the Joint Select Committee with the three living ex-Viceroy members of it, both Houses of Parliament, the present Viceroy, and all the Provincial Governors and the overwhelming majority of high officials who have recently returned all advise this course. Never has there been so great a weight of experience behind any proposals for constitutional reform. Should not prudent men and women who have no time or chance to study in detail this huge and difficult problem be guided by this great array of experts and men of affairs?

But there is another almost equally overwhelming reason in favour of this course.

No one either here or in India has produced any workable alternative. It is true that in India a chorus of disapproval has been raised against the Committee's recommendations. There was bound to be an outburst of criticism. No Indian public man can afford to be wholly satisfied with any scheme that contains any reservations or safeguards. The significant fact is not the outburst of criticism but the total absence of any constructive proposals. No one in India has produced a workable alternative.

Neither has anyone here in Great Britain produced a workable alternative. The Socialist members of the Committee and the group led by Lord Salisbury brought forward sketches



of an alternative policy. In the judgment of the most experienced members of the Committee both these suggestions, for they were little more than suggestions, either went too far or not far enough. The Socialists, going much further than the political development of India permits at the present time, weakened the safeguards that are as necessary for Indian interests as our own.

Lord Salisbury's suggestions do not go far enough. He and Mr. Churchill, his spokesman in the House of Commons, believe that you can deal with the question piecemeal. We are convinced that the constitutional problem in India is single and indivisible and must be dealt with comprehensively. They take the view that advance should be confined to the Provinces while the Central Government is left substantially as it is at present. Such an idea is attractive at first sight, and it has at times appealed to many, including myself, who now support the recommendations of the Committee. The great majority, however, of those who have started on this line have found, as they came to closer grips with the problem, that it led them into an impasse. There are very few to-day who, having been through the whole process of examination, still believe that the development of self-government can be confined to the Provinces. There are others, like Mr. Churchill and Lord Lloyd, who refused to be members of the Committee but who adhere to this idea without having been through the process of examination. The fact is that, if you embark at all on further developments, you must proceed substantially to the point advocated by the Joint Select Committee. You must, in effect, concede Provincial autonomy, that is to say self-government in the Provinces, All-India Federation at the Centre and responsibility with safeguards. The arguments against the recommendations of the Committee are really arguments for not going forward at all. If Lord Salisbury and Mr. Churchill are right, we ought to go back and not go forward.

The reasons why, if you go forward at all, you must proceed to the point recommended by the Committee are three-fold. In the first place, you will turn the whole of political India into opposition if you confine your reforms to the Provinces and leave the Centre untouched. Secondly, by leaving the Centre as it is, you do nothing to meet the claim of the Indian States that they should share in the determination of policies that affect their welfare. Thirdly, if you create popular Governments in the Provinces while leaving the Centre with

an official and irremovable executive, confronted by a large hostile majority in the legislature, you will create a situation of friction and instability between the units and the Centre that will endanger the two main functions of the Central Government, the maintenance of defence and the maintenance of credit. Autonomous Provinces without a federal link at the Centre would drift further and further apart and make an All-India Federation impossible for all time.

Apart from this fundamental difference between Lord Salisbury and Mr. Churchill and the Committee, there is another difference of vital importance. They refuse to agree to the main recommendation of the Simon Commission that law and order should be transferred to Indian Ministers in the Provinces. Without the transfer of law and order, Provincial autonomy is a sham and a delusion. With this fact in your minds, you will understand why Sir John Simon and every surviving member of his Commission repudiate the critics' claim to find support for their contentions in the Report of the Statutory Commission.

One of the criticisms most strongly urged against the policy of the Committee is that it lacks the element of approval in India. You will judge whether this is a criticism to be made legitimately by those whose policy would certainly alienate once and for all every section of Indian political thought, would inaugurate a new period of non-co-operation and boycott, and would lead inevitably away from our traditional position of government by consent into a system of government by force. Criticism in India must not be taken to mean that Indians will obstruct the reforms. The Viceroy and all the Governors tell me that on the contrary Indians will work them. The reforms offer India a very wide field of self-government and Indians cannot wisely or safely stand out of it.

As for the Indian States, I repudiate altogether any suggestion that improper pressure has been brought to bear upon the Princes to force them into the proposed Federation against their will. No evidence has been adduced of such pressure, and the only evidence that exists is evidence of pressure being used by Mr. Churchill and his friends to keep the States out of Federation. The Princes have been anxious about certain safeguards and when they find, as I believe they will, that their anxieties have been removed, they will make good their original undertakings that were the starting point of this policy and enter the Federation in the interests alike of their own States and of their Mother-country, India.

You will see from what I am saying that I am not trying to describe our policy in any detail. Most of you know as much about it as I could summarise in a short time. I am chiefly anxious to impress upon you the fact that it is comprehensive and that it all hangs together. There cannot be Provincial autonomy without Federation, and Federation must be All-India Federation embracing the States and British India. If there is to be Federation there must be responsibility in the Central Government if only to satisfy the requirements of the Princes who will not enter a Federation controlled by Whitehall. And finally in the present circumstances of India and in the conditions arising out of our historic association with the country there must be a system of reservations and safeguards to ensure stability and security.

With regard to these safeguards, I will only say that they are utterly unlike anything provided in our Treaty with Ireland and in the Irish Constitution. The only safeguard that we had in the case of Ireland was a paper safeguard of good faith resting upon the fact that the Irish settlement was signed by the plenipotentiaries of the Irish people and was ratified by the Irish Parliament. There is no point of resemblance whatever between the Irish and the Indian cases.

The final test of our policy is whether it is one for the better government of India. This is the broad question that contains within it the issue that is constantly in our minds, the future welfare of the Indian masses. The millions of toiling workers cannot be treated as an isolated part of the population that has no connection with the rest. I certainly do not suggest that self-government is, in itself, preferable to good government. Such a suggestion would be entirely inconsistent with the record of our rule in India. But I do maintain that the old system of paternal government, great as have been its achievements on behalf of the Indian masses in the past, is no longer sufficient. However good it has been, it cannot survive a century of Western education, a long period of free speech and of a free press and our own deliberate policy of developing Parliamentary government. We have reached the point when the welfare of the people depends upon co-operation between the Government and the political elements of the country and when the most difficult social questions such as the status of women and child marriage can only be settled by Indians themselves. For 15 years many of the subjects that most directly affect the vital interests of the workers, such as health and education, have been in the charge of responsible Ministers.

Lord Salisbury and Mr. Churchill do not propose to withdraw the departments that are already in Indian hands. Indeed they profess to be willing to transfer practically all the subjects that affect the daily lives of the Indian masses. Why then do they attack us as if we were sacrificing the interests of the masses to Indian politicians and as if they were seeking to preserve and safeguard them?

In the conditions of the present day, the interests of the people as a whole will be most effectively served by a wide franchise that will give them for the first time a say in their own government, and by a system of responsibility and political opportunity that will attract the best men into public life.

If we want evidence as to what the masses of the people think about their own future prospects, what better could we have than that of the Depressed Classes, often called the Untouchables, with whom we rightly have so much sympathy? Their leader, Dr. Ambedkar, has time after time supported proposals on the lines of the Report. For the first time the Depressed Classes will have an effective voice in Provincial politics. They at least believe that a new chapter of hope and opportunity is being opened to them.

I hope I have now succeeded in convincing you that our policy is a policy of prudent progress, that it is supported by authority and experience, and that it offers the only possible course of action. Have I succeeded in persuading you? If I have you will probably be saying, "If this is the Government programme why should it continue to be opposed in Parliament? Why should both Houses be asked to sacrifice to it time that might be better spent on the discussion of domestic affairs?" I hope that someone in the course of this debate will answer these questions. I will only make this remark in connection with them. I suppose that Labour being the official Opposition will feel bound to oppose. I feel sure, however, that in opposing they will maintain the attitude of caution and responsibility that they took up in the recent debates. If they oppose, they will not, I am sure, obstruct. If they criticise, they will still advise Indians to work the scheme.

But Mr. Churchill and his friends are not the official opposition. They are a section of the principal party that supports the Government, and by no means a big section of it. For years past they have been carrying on a relentless campaign against our Indian policy. Some may think that they have already carried their opposition too far. Surely at any rate they have carried it far enough. They have had every chance

of converting their own Party and in spite of the ability and sincerity of many of them they have failed. They have failed in a great party meeting. They have failed in the House of Commons. They have failed in the House of Lords. Is it too much to hope that they will listen to an appeal not to delay reforms that, in the view of the Viceroy and all the Governors in India, are already overdue? Is it too much to hope that Parliament, approving the careful and conscientious work of its own Committee, will expedite the passage of the Bill and in the year that is opening to-day keep its hands as free as possible to grapple with the questions of work, wages, housing and taxation that affect so closely every British citizen?

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15. SPEECH DELIVERED AT OXFORD ON THE  
23RD JANUARY, 1935.

*(Extracts regarding the Government of India Bill, etc.)*

In the course of the next twenty-four hours there will be circulated the biggest and perhaps the most complex Bill that has ever been introduced into Parliament. The Bill will deal with every phase of the future government of India. It will contain the proposals, in the nature of things complicated proposals, for the setting up of an All-India Federation. It will contain constitutional schemes for eleven great Provinces, several of them more populous than some of the chief States of the world. It will contain a constitution for Burma, henceforth to be separated from India.

Of course, there will be an outburst of criticism when the Bill appears. There has already been a full measure of criticism in India of the Report of the Joint Select Committee. The Indian Congress seems already to have exhausted the last word in the vocabulary of political criticism. I am not surprised. The Congress from the start has repudiated the right of the British Parliament to draw up an Indian constitution and has demanded a constituent assembly free to make any scheme that it desires. I observe in passing that great sections of Indian opinion have strongly opposed the idea of a constituent assembly, and nine Indians out of ten know that such an assembly would never reach agreement. The point, however, that I wish to emphasise is that the Congress having repudiated the rights of the British Parliament to deal with the Indian Constitution will object with the greatest possible vigour to any proposals that Parliament makes, whether they be these proposals or any others.

I pass now to our British critics. Like all people who stand for a policy of moderation, we are exposed to attack on two flanks. We are accused on the one hand of abdication and surrender, and we are charged on the other hand with the error of making concessions so insignificant that they will not serve their purpose. These respective points of view have been expounded lately in the series of broadcast talks arranged by the B.B.C. by Major Attlee and Lord Lloyd. Let me say at once that I greatly appreciate Major Attlee's obvious sense of responsibility and Lord Lloyd's equally obvious strength of

feeling in dealing with the problem. No doubt you will wish me to say something in answer to these statements. I could take them each one by one and subject them to individual criticism. But they are contradictory and mutually destructive, and I think it will save your time and serve my purpose if I contrast them.

Lord Lloyd's address was a study in black and white, in which he magnified some points and minimised others to suit his own point of view. Major Attlee's, on the other hand, was a composition in neutral tones in which he slurred over difficulties and made the obstacles to full self-government in India appear less formidable than they really are.

Lord Lloyd charged us with failing to deal with the real problem on its merits and with seeking exclusively to achieve the futile task of conciliating a small and negligible body of irreconcilable opponents in India. But according to Major Attlee our fault is rather that of a wooden and unimaginative opposition to the claim of India for equality of status and of failure to satisfy the Indians' sense of self-respect.

The body of politicians to whom we are, in Lord Lloyd's view, surrendering, are, according to Major Attlee, looked upon by us merely as a potential opposition, not as a co-operating body, and he thinks that the Report of the Joint Select Committee is characterised by our evident distrust of them.

Lord Lloyd emphasises the diversity of race, language, religion and caste. Major Attlee speaks of India as a nation and argues that we have omitted from our plan that which is necessary to evoke the loyal co-operation of Indian nationalism. While Lord Lloyd fails to recognise the force of the nationalist spirit which is sweeping through all classes in India just as it is sweeping through all classes in other Eastern countries, equally Major Attlee treats nationalism as if it had already prevailed over communal and other cleavages to such an extent as to form the basis for a full-fledged system of self-government.

Alike they seem to appeal to the interests of the masses of the population as supporting the vastly different contentions which they put forward. Lord Lloyd says that if the prosperity of the people in India had ever been the main concern of these reforms he would have had nothing to fear, in other words, he is sure that if this had been our aim we should have restricted our proposals for the development of self-government to much more modest dimensions.

Major Attlee, on the other hand, whose claim to base himself upon the interests of the common people is surely at

least as valid as that of Lord Lloyd, finds the remedy for their grievances in votes and still more votes, in a great extension rather than in a restriction of self-government.

Let us observe another contrast in this same connection. Lord Lloyd argues that the effect of our proposals will be to hand over the masses of the people to a small and inexperienced section of politicians. But according to Major Attlee there will be an exploitation of the poor by the rich and privileged classes, and we have sought by giving power to Conservative interests to prevent the politicians from getting control.

Major Attlee deplores our failure to live up to the spirit of the Round Table Conference summoned by the Labour Government so that agreement might be achieved between the representatives of all shades of Indian political thought, including the Congress and ourselves. Lord Lloyd attributes the whole of what he regards as our present weakness precisely to the fact that at the time of the Round Table Conference and from that time onwards, we have ceased to deal fearlessly with the question on its merits, and have sought only to bring about a timid accommodation between ourselves and Indian political agitation.

I come now to what matters more than all the negative criticism in the world. I come to the real question that matters. Will the Bill work?

Leaving aside extremists in both countries, I believe there is a large amount of common ground as to what is desired on both sides. Reasonable Indians want a large extension of self-government, and reasonable people here are ready to concede it. Equally, both parties desire to avoid the disastrous results which may follow upon too sudden and precipitate changes. Indians do not wish to deprive themselves of the advantage of our experience and our help. They only apprehend that these may be pressed to a point that would impinge upon the degree of self-government of which they feel themselves capable. We on our part only wish to retain power in our own hands so far as is necessary to safeguard in emergency the essentials of good government, to protect interests that still need protection, and to carry out obligations that our long partnership with India has created. Our policy is drawn up with an object which both parties virtually have in common.

The misfortune is that inevitably the plan is scrutinised from different points of view, and the aspect that presents itself most conspicuously to people in India is not the aspect that is most apparent in this country. To us the impressive



fact is the amount of liberty which we propose to concede, and the difficulty is to persuade people here that the safeguards and reservations will really be adequate and effective. In the eyes of Indians the amount of liberty is obscured by the safeguards. Indian critics are apprehensive that the Governor-General and the Governors will be dictators, the critics in this country think that all political power is being surrendered into the hands of an unrepresentative group of political demagogues and theorists. In both cases the actual working of the Constitution will show that there has been unnecessary apprehension.

People are apt to concentrate too much on the abstract side of the question. We shall do better to consider how the Constitution will work in practice. As the Report itself says, the Constitution will depend "far more upon the manner and spirit in which it is worked than upon its formal provisions." It is neither fair nor sensible to assume the worst and to imagine that either the Governor-General or the Governors or the Services or the Ministers or the Legislatures, each of them or all of them, will insist upon defying the underlying intentions of the policy, and will exploit their own position to the exclusion of all harmony and co-operation and with the only result of creating friction and bringing about deadlock. No constitution will work on such assumptions and not only this but any other constitution would be vitiated if a spirit of this sort prevailed.

Common sense and past experience equally point to different assumptions. In the past 15 years Legislatures and Ministers in India have shown a spirit of responsibility which has been noteworthy in circumstances not conspicuously favouring responsibility. The Services have shown a remarkable capacity for adjusting themselves to new conditions. The Governors have maintained good relations with their Ministers and Legislatures and have wisely allowed the experiment in self-government to proceed without injury to essential elements of the administration. Why should all this suddenly stop because there is going to be a further step along the road that is already being followed? Why should the Legislatures become incorrigibly obstructive? Why should the Ministers cease to value the counsel and experience of the Governors and devote themselves to misgovernment? Why should the Governors suddenly turn themselves into dictators? In actual practice, none of these things will happen. There will be no more temptation to the Governors to issue emergency ordinances than to the Legislatures and Ministers to stage Constitutional breakdowns.

Much will, of course, depend upon the Governor-General and the Governors. Even more than in the past they will be the keystones of the building. In the past they have known how to act as men of good sense and good-will. They have been able to combine the functions of political guidance under certain conditions with firm executive action under other conditions, and in so doing they have worked the Constitution as it was meant to be worked. The intention of the new Constitution will be to extend the sphere of their political guidance and to diminish that of their executive action. Why should we assume that they will be less successful in observing the spirit of the new Constitution and in striking the due balance between their diverse functions in the future than in the past.

I have no doubt whatever myself that those who to-day hold these high offices in India will successfully discharge their duties under the new plan to the satisfaction of all sensible people and they are confident of their own ability to do so. I am not so pessimistic or so defeatist as to suppose that when the time comes for these distinguished servants of the State to leave their posts we shall not be able to find equally good men to take their places.

I have now said something about the Bill. I have spoken of the critics both Indian and British and I have tried to show how the Bill will work if there is a reasonable amount of common-sense on both sides. We have now to pass it and to pass it, as I hope, without undue delay. Faced with a measure of this size and complexity the machinery of Parliamentary government is put to a formidable test. Shall we succeed? Will a democratic Parliament in the full glare of press and public criticism and interest be able to deal with this complex and controversial measure? I am no facile optimist and I have no intention of under-rating the difficulties before us. None the less, I believe that Parliament will succeed in the attempt and by its success will show to the world that British Parliamentary Government is still instinct with life and filled with vigour. If we succeed, we shall have achieved something that was never effected in any period of Indian history, something that was never reached even in the greatest days of the Moghul Empire. We shall have united Indians in an All-India Federation in which Indian Princes and British Indian public men, Moslems and Hindus, Sikhs and Christians can work together for Indian progress, prosperity and prestige within the great circle of the Commonwealth of the British Empire.



16. SPEECH DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS  
ON THE 6TH FEBRUARY, 1935, ON THE MOTION FOR  
THE SECOND READING OF THE GOVERNMENT OF  
INDIA BILL.

I beg to move, "That the Bill be now read a Second time."

Sir Philip Francis tells in his memoirs how once he was supping with Warren Hastings and the conversation turned upon Robinson Crusoe.

"While the rest of the company were talking"—

I quote his words—

"Hastings seemed lost in a reverie, in which I little expected that Robinson Crusoe could be concerned. At last he gravely declared that he had often read the book with singular satisfaction, but that no passage in it had ever struck him so much as where the hero is said to have built a monstrous boat at a distance from the sea, without knowing by what means he was to convey it to the water. 'And, by Jove,' said Hastings, 'the same thing has happened to myself a hundred times in my life'."

Has the same thing happened to us in building this gigantic Bill? Have we built a gigantic boat, and may we find it very difficult to launch? When it is launched will it be watertight and seaworthy? These are questions to which I am going to address my observations this afternoon. They are questions which, I believe, are in the minds of every hon. Member to-day. On the benches opposite right hon. and hon. Gentlemen state in their Amendment that our design is not bold enough. On the benches on my right some of my right hon. and hon. Friends—I hope in diminishing number—in their Amendment, for totally different reasons, damn the Bill with bell, book and candle. One of them, whose identity is easily recognised by his full-blooded vocabulary and his superabundance of metaphor, described the Bill as

"a gigantic quilt of jumbled crochet work. A monstrous monument of shame built by pygmies."

My right hon. Friend, who is otherwise engaged this afternoon, thinks of all of us—all the Members of the Government, the majority of the Joint Select Committee, all the surviving members of the Simon Commission, all the ex-Viceroy, the present Viceroy and all the Governors—as miserable Lilliputian

pygmies, and he alone is the only Gulliver in the land. Be that as it may, being Secretary of State for India I once again follow the very wise injunction which was made by the directors of the Court of the East India Company to their clerical staff : " Humdrum is our style." I have seen so many fine phrases in Indian Debates come back, like boomerangs, on their makers, I have seen so many purple patches fade away under the glare of Indian suns or in the cold light of Parliamentary Debates, that even if I had the wings I should not attempt any rhetorical flights. Rather would I attempt to achieve three purposes this afternoon : first of all, to give the House a broad survey of the Bill itself ; secondly, to suggest to the House the main issues of controversy between one section of us and another ; and, thirdly, to describe to the House the object that the Government have in mind in asking the House to pass this Bill.

I will begin with the first chapter of the Bill, the chapter dealing with All-India Federation. Any Federal Government is bound to be more complicated than a unitary Government, and in the case of an All-India Federation there is the additional complication due to the fact that the units are as different as the Indian States are from the British India Provinces. Those complications react upon almost every clause in the Federal chapter. They react, for instance, upon the provisions as to how the Federation is to be formed, for it is obvious that the Princes, being voluntary agents, can only enter of their own volition. They react, again, upon the kind of executive and the kind of legislature that is proposed, each side of the Federation obviously demanding adequate representation both in the Government and in the Federal Legislature. They react, again, upon the relations between the two Federal Chambers, the Princes, from the first, attaching the greatest possible importance to the Chambers having equal powers. They react, further, upon the list of Federal subjects, the Princes, again, rightly insisting that, apart from the functions of Government which they surrender to the Federation, there should be no interference in their internal sovereignty. These complications make a formidable list of difficulties, but I would ask the House to observe, first of all, that nine out of 10 Members in this House, indeed I believe 99 out of 100 Members, regard All-India Federation as our objective, whether immediate or ultimate ; and, secondly, that all these difficulties which I have just enumerated are inherent in an All-India Federation, whether it come about under this Bill or whether it come about this year, or next year, or under another Bill in 20 years time.

That being so, I claim that the differences that will arise in our discussions on the Federal Chapter will be differences of method rather than differences of principle. For instance, should the Bill include a Federal Chapter as well as a Provincial Chapter, that is to say, should the Federation come under the same Bill as Provincial autonomy? That is a question of method and not a question of principle. Secondly, is the kind of Federal machinery the best kind of federal machinery in the circumstances? Hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite made alternative proposals. They were turned down by the Committee, and I think on very good grounds, but I imagine they will raise their alternatives again in our discussions. Thirdly, should the method of election for the Federal Legislature be direct or indirect election? That is a question which, I know, interests intensely a certain section in this House. The Committee weighed the arguments on both sides and found that there were very serious objections in either course. None the less they came to the view that in the circumstances indirect election was the wiser plan, and that indirect election, or any method of election, is bound to be in the nature of an experiment.

I have quoted those instances to show that the character of the Federation reacts upon all the Federal organs. I have said a word about the Federal Legislature and the Federal Executive. Let me now say a word about one or two other Federal organs. I do not think I need pause on the chapter dealing with the Federal Court. I think everybody admits that in a Federation there must be a Federal Court for the purpose of interpreting the Constitution, and I believe myself that when we come to that chapter we shall find little or no difference among any hon. Members on that point. There are, however, two other Federal organs upon which I might say a word by way of illustration, the Reserve Bank and the Railway Board. The proposals for a Reserve Bank and a Railway Board are in each case the result of a long and expert investigation, and on the whole I think they are workable proposals. I believe myself that when we come to discuss them we shall find that the one issue between us is not whether there should be a Reserve Bank or a Railway Board but, rather, whether these institutions should be politically controlled or run upon independent business lines. That was the issue which was raised in Committee by right hon. and hon. Members opposite, and here again, no doubt, they will bring it to the attention of the House. My own view is very strongly on the side of the

Committee, and very strongly behind the proposals in the Bill, namely, that the Reserve Bank and the Railway Board, if they are to fulfil the purpose which we desire them to fulfil, must be kept as independent as possible from political management and political interference. I have quoted these instances from the Federal Chapter, not to suggest that the provisions of the Federation are either simple or uncontroversial—they are neither—but rather to suggest to hon. Members that the issues of major controversy are limited in number.

I pass to the next chapter—the Provincial Chapter. It is a long one comprising many Clauses, but if hon. Members will read it they will see that the greater part is little more than a repetition of the Federal Chapter. I think that three Clauses out of four are almost identical with the Clauses in the Federal Chapter. We might have dealt with this Chapter by means of cross references to the Federal Chapter. On the whole, I think we were wise in taking the other course. We felt it was much fairer to the Provinces to receive their constitutions in this part of the Bill, so that they should see their constitutions set out in self-contained provisions and at length. Similarly, I felt, from a good deal of experience in this House, that, though the large number of Clauses might look very formidable, hon. Members would greatly prefer to see the whole story set out simply and in detail, rather than have to search about by cross references to other parts of the Bill.

So far as the substance of this Chapter is concerned, I do not believe that we shall find many issues to divide us. So far as I am aware, every Member in this House, wherever he sits, has admitted the need for Provincial autonomy. The question that will divide some of us will be this: Is it possible to have Provincial autonomy without the transfer of law and order? My friends and I—and we are supported by the overwhelming majority of the Joint Select Committee—take the very definite view that it is quite impossible to give further and real responsibility to the Provinces without making the transfer of law and order, and that being so, the question arises for the House to consider, assuming that law and order are transferred, is the plan set out in the Bill the best plan to safeguard the morale, the organisation and secret intelligence of the police?

There is another question, which, no doubt, will be raised on this Chapter. It is a question which very much interests right hon. and hon. Members opposite—should there or should there not be Second Chambers in the Provinces? The House will observe that, in accordance with the Committee's recom-

mendation, we are proposing an addition of Second Chambers, over and above what were proposed in the White Paper, in the Provinces of Madras and Bombay. I think we shall find when we come to discuss the questions of Second Chambers in the Provinces, that there is good ground for that recommendation, and that the view of the Joint Select Committee is a wise view, namely, that wherever Second Chambers can be effectively set up in the Provinces, they should, generally speaking, be set up. Apart from those two questions—I am coming later on to the question of special responsibilities—I myself do not see other major issues of controversy in the Provincial Chapter.

I pass now to a number of provisions which concern both the Federation and the Provinces, and I begin with the provision concerned with the reserved Departments and the special responsibilities of the Viceroy and the Provincial Governors. Here, at least, it might be thought that there would be wide difference in principle between one section of the House and another. Yet it is a significant fact that during all these last four or five years of discussion, first of all with Indians at the Round Table Conference, and, secondly, in the Joint Select Committee, there has been a surprising measure not of disagreement but of agreement. There has been, for instance, general agreement from the very beginning of our discussions that, in the circumstances of India, defence must be a reserved department. Upon the reservation of defence, it almost inevitably follows also that the department of external affairs, being so closely connected with defence, must also be reserved. The point of difference, therefore, has not been the reservation of the department of defence, but whether it is or is not possible to put a time limit to that reservation. Is it possible in a Bill to set out a time-table under which, in progressive stages, the Indian Army is Indianised? We have discussed that question over and over again. While we have every desire to help India along the road of responsibility, we see no means of including in any Bill conditions over which this House, and no other House, has really any control. But, no doubt, we shall hear more of that question when we come to discuss the Chapter on defence.

Passing to the special responsibilities, there, again, we have behind our proposals a really remarkable measure of agreement. From the very start of our discussions there has been a general admission that over a certain field of government certain special powers of intervention are inevitable in the present condition of India. Indeed, there has been very little difference of opinion



even over the extent of this special field of administration, this special field of government, perhaps, I should rather say. The difference which has arisen has not been so much as to whether there should be this field of special responsibilities or not, whether there should be a certain scope or not, but rather over the definition of the special responsibilities. Should they be defined more precisely in certain respects as we define them in the Bill? On the other hand, in certain circumstances should the special powers of intervention be dealt with by powers of a more general character?

I will take one of these special responsibilities as an instance of what I am trying to explain to the House. I will take the special responsibility connected with the question which I know is in the minds of many hon. Members here, and in the minds of many of our friends in India, that is commercial discrimination. It has been admitted, I think, by everyone that some safeguard is necessary in the circumstances. The representatives of the Labour Party on the Committee took the view that a general power in the Governor-General to refuse his sanction to the introduction of a Bill involving unfair discrimination was sufficient. The majority of the Committee held, however, that it was necessary to be more precise if the Governor-General and Indian Ministers were not to be left in a state of dangerous obscurity.

Accordingly, the Bill, following the recommendations of the Committee, defines the safeguards under two main headings, first of all, reciprocity of treatment for British and Indian traders and companies, and, secondly, the power of intervention if Indian tariffs were to be used, not in the economic interests of India, but with the object of injuring the interests of the United Kingdom. The spirit in which those provisions are to be applied will be fully explained in the Instrument of Instructions. All that I need say at present is that so far as tariffs are concerned, our intention is substantially to continue the same fiscal autonomy that has existed in India for the last 14 years. British imports into India will, I am convinced, receive the same consideration as under the present Convention. The powers taken in the Bill, if they ever have to be used, will, I am satisfied, be adequate. When we come to the detailed discussion of this very important question, we shall see whether there is any responsible Member in any part of the House who will propose the abrogation of fiscal autonomy. I can only say that every Government since the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms has accepted the Fiscal Autonomy Convention, and

that no Member of any of those Governments, so far as I know, has hitherto proposed its abrogation. I am not surprised. The surest way to destroy British trade in India is to attempt to impose upon India a tariff from Great Britain. It was this policy which lost us the American Colonies. Was not Chatham right in resisting North's attempts to impose a fiscal policy from Great Britain?

"If you conquer them, what then? You cannot make them respect you. You cannot make them wear your cloth."

My right hon. Friend the Lord President of the Council, equally true to the Tory tradition, a century and a half later, was saying exactly the same thing when he told a Lancashire audience:

"You cannot sell cotton goods on the point of the bayonet."

I cannot to-day in the time at my disposal deal further with this question. I would only say that the great issues to be discussed seem to be: First, whether the provisions as to reciprocity and discrimination are satisfactory; and, second, whether anyone seriously proposes the abrogation of the Indian Fiscal Autonomy Convention.

There are three more Chapters in the Bill connected both with the Federation and the Provinces, about which I want to make a few observations. There is the Chapter upon the Services, a very long Chapter of about 40 Clauses. This might seem a very formidable undertaking, but when hon. Members come to study it they will find that substantially it does no more than set out in statutory form the long series of rules connected with the Services which now only appear as administrative orders. There is scarcely a proposal in this long Chapter that is new; there is scarcely a proposal that is not already in those administrative orders. There will be two issues that the House will no doubt wish to discuss, and the first is whether the majority of the Committee and the Government in the provisions of the Bill are taking the wisest course as to recruitment. The Bill proposes very briefly to continue recruitment on its present lines. The Committee studied the question in very great detail and came to the conclusion, which I think was a very wise conclusion, that it was all-important in view of the very difficult task with these great reforms coming into being, to do nothing to disturb the Services or to increase the anxiety of men, Indian as well as British—because this is not

simply a British issue—upon whose shoulders will depend so much the success of the Bill.

Secondly, there is the further question connected with the Services that I know has interested, and rightly interested, many hon. Members, that is the question of pensions. Here again the Bill accepts the Committee's very careful conclusions. In their and our view, no pensioner need feel anxious as to the security in future of his pension. Moreover, so far as the family pension funds are concerned the Bill, following the Committee's recommendation, offers the beneficiaries the choice between letting the money stay in India or having it transferred to trustees in London in the near future. Apart from those two questions I do not believe that we shall find this long Chapter on the Services a controversial Chapter.

Then there is the very important Chapter upon the Judicature—the Chapter on the High Courts, the subordinate courts, and the subordinate judiciary. It is an all-important Chapter which I believe we shall find to be almost uncontroversial. It was the aim of the Committee, and it has been the aim of the Government in making the proposals dealing with this all-important question to achieve the objective of keeping the judicature, superior and subordinate, free and independent of political influence. I believe it will be found that we have been not unsuccessful in achieving that objective.

Lastly, I come to a Chapter of the very greatest importance in its reactions both on the Federal Government and on the Provincial Governments, and that is the Chapter on finance. It is a Chapter that is fundamental to the whole scheme. It is bound to be a very complicated Chapter. The financial relations between the Federal Government and the Provinces are bound to be complicated. Apart from the financial obligation which has grown up between India and Great Britain it will be seen that, however one may attempt to deal with finance, the attempt must give rise to a good many complex feelings. I imagine, however, that, apart from the technical issues, the main question will be this: Can India afford the proposed Reforms? Can it pay both for Federation and for Autonomy in the Provinces at the same time? These questions we must fully discuss, and I hope that we shall discuss them dispassionately and without exaggeration.

Let me at this stage make three preliminary observations. First of all, the actual cost of the new Federal machinery is estimated at only £500,000 a year and the actual cost of the new Provincial machinery at a similar amount. Secondly,

the rest of the burden will be thrown on the Central Budget, of about £4,000,000 a year, namely, about 4 per cent. of the Government of India revenue, does not represent new expenditure and is in no sense expenditure attributable to the constitutional proposals, but represents the transfer to the Centre of a burden which would otherwise have rested on the shoulders of Burma and certain of the Provinces. Thirdly, Indian finances react very quickly to more favourable conditions. No better instance can be found than our experience during the last three or four years in which we have seen Indian budgets and Indian credit rapidly improving in the most remarkable manner. With this experience behind us, and the fact that this sum amounts to only a small percentage of Indian revenues, we need not, I think, take a pessimistic view about the financial basis of the scheme.

I must now say a word about Burma. It is not from any want of interest in Burma that I have left my allusions to the Burmese proposals to the end, but it is rather because almost the whole of the 150 Clauses dealing with Burma are a repetition of Clauses from either the Federal or Provincial Chapters in the Indian part of the Bill. I believe that when we come to discuss the Burma Clauses there will be a great majority in the House in favour of separation of Burma from India and that the main problem—I admit a very difficult problem—will be that of the economic relations between Burma and India and the reactions upon this country.

Lastly, there are certain proposals which concern equally all parts of the Bill, the Federal Chapter, the Provincial Chapter, and the Burma Chapter alike. They are connected with the Instruments of Instructions that will be issued to the Viceroy and the Governors as to the spirit in which they are to carry out their duties under the Act. Constitutional experts will remember the part the Instruments of Instructions have played in other parts of the Empire. In the case of India they are of peculiar importance. Where the situation is as complicated as this situation is, it is essential that the Viceroy and the Governors should be given clear instructions as to the spirit in which they are to carry out their duties. It is equally important from the point of view of Indians, because in the nature of things this Constitution is a rigid constitution, and it can only be amended by future Acts of Parliament. It is rigid because of the peculiar conditions prevalent in India and because Parliament here would not be prepared to abandon its oversight of future changes. Into this Constitution

it is, however, possible to introduce an element of growth and flexibility by means of the Instructions. The Instructions, therefore, will obviously play a very important part in the development of the Constitution. That being so, we are proposing to adopt the procedure recommended by the Committee that, for the first time in our history, the Draft Instructions should receive the Parliamentary sanction of both Houses. We feel that they will be of such importance, both from the British and from the Indian point of view, that there ought to be Parliamentary sanction behind them. We therefore propose, at about the time that the Committee stage begins, to circulate the Draft Instructions in the form of a White Paper. At the proper time we shall have to ask both Houses to discuss them, and we shall have to obtain the Parliamentary sanction of both Houses before they are issued to the Viceroy and to the Provincial Governors.

I have attempted, I hope not at undue length, to give a general survey of the Chapters of the Bill, and to suggest to hon. Members the major issues that are likely to arise between us. Let me sum up this part of my observations. I would venture to claim, first of all, that, big as the Bill appears—it has 450 Clauses in all—it is nothing like so big in substance as it appears. Secondly, practically every proposal in it is the result of four years', indeed, I might say of seven years', discussion, ending with the meticulous investigation of the Joint Select Committee, a Committee composed of Members of both Houses, who investigated every detail of it. Thirdly, the Bill follows substantially all the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee. Lastly, if my survey is a correct one, and I believe it to be correct, I think I may claim that the issues of major importance are strictly limited. This being so, I hope I am not over sanguine and optimistic when I express the hope that the House will be able to deal with it with reasonable expedition.

I come now to the third objective which, when I began my speech, I stated was in the mind of the Government. What is it that we hope to achieve when this Bill passes? When last I addressed the House I said I believed that the majority of Indians would work the Bill, and that British-Indian relations would improve when the Bill was worked. Nothing that has happened since I spoke in December has altered my view. I am aware of the volume of criticism that has met the Bill in India. I am fully aware of the recent debates in the Indian Assembly. I noted in particular, and I noted with great

regret, the debate upon the Supplementary Trade Agreement. I am genuinely sorry that so many Indians should seem to misunderstand our motives and should look upon these proposals as if they were sudden tyrannical dictates from the Government in Great Britain, rather than the result of constant discussion with India, and, indeed, a result of the very large body of agreement between ourselves and Indians.

Attaching full importance to all this criticism, I ask the House to keep it in its proper perspective. I ask the House, first of all, to note the fact, that the main critics in India are the members of the Congress Party, the largest party in the Indian Assembly. The Congress Party has always made its position clear, namely, that it will accept no proposals from this House, whether these proposals or any other proposals, whether this Bill or a Bill on the lines of the Labour Amendment. They have made it quite clear that the only proposals they will accept are the proposals that might emerge from an Indian Constituent Assembly. It goes, therefore, without saying, that Congress will be opposed to any proposals that this House is likely to make.

Secondly, outside the Assembly I note the fact that most of the Provincial Councils have now held discussions upon the proposals of the Committee, and I have been told that they have been very reasonable discussions on the whole. They have made one thing quite clear, namely, that Provincial politicians are prepared to work the Bill. Let us remember how great will be the part of the Provinces and the Provincial politicians in an All-India Federation. It is a very hopeful feature of the situation that the very men upon whom will depend so much the working of the future Federation are the men who seem to make it clear that the proposals are workable.

Thirdly, there is the significant fact that the Princes, in spite of the pressure upon them—not from me, not from the Government, but from other directions—have in no way recoiled from the position that they took up four years ago. Quite rightly, they claimed that they must see the final proposals before giving their final assent or dissent. The House may, however, rest assured that there is no evidence to show that the Princes, great and small and of medium position, have altered their general attitude towards the question of an All-India Federation.

These are significant facts. They confirm me further in the conviction, first of all, that the Bill will be worked; and, secondly, that neither now nor at any future time is it possible

to hope for general agreement in India about any scheme. If Parliament waits for general agreement, it will wait for ever. Indeed, I go so far as to say that I do not believe that within our lifetime we shall ever get more agreement in India upon any scheme that Parliament is likely to pass than we have obtained for this scheme. The time has come for Parliament to act, and, the longer Parliament takes in acting, the greater will be the opposition in India, and the less will be the agreement that we shall have behind our proposals.

Let us face realities. The real danger in India is not Congress, or Communism, or misgovernment; it is irresponsibility. As long as Indian Assemblies have no responsibility to govern, so we must expect negative criticism, and even mischievous obstruction. Has it not been the history of the British Empire that irresponsibility is the real danger to good relations between the Mother Country and its Overseas dependencies? It was this sense of irresponsibility, carrying with it the sense of inequality of status, that was at the bottom of the trouble with the American colonies in the 18th century. The American colonists, from George Washington downwards, were, speaking generally, Tory die-hard squires. They were men of a very conservative type, with every inclination to remain friendly with the country of their birth, yet it was this divorce between legislative councils and the Government which embedded in their mind a feeling of inequality of status, and it was that, I am convinced, that led to the loss of our first Empire.

It almost lost us the Dominion of Canada. Let the House remember what was the state of Canada. A hundred years ago Upper and Lower Canada were in a state of suppressed rebellion. The Nationalists in the two Provinces—they were called the Reform Party—had the almost complete control of the two Canadian Legislatures. Having no responsibility for government, they used their power in obstructing the administration and concentrating upon it negative criticism whatever it might do. Eventually this state of affairs culminated in a rebellion in both Provinces. It was in those conditions that Lord Durham was sent to Canada, first of all as Governor-General and then as High Commissioner. He had every temptation to adopt a policy of coercion and repression. There was no one of note in either Province of Canada who was prepared to co-operate with him. Yet, in spite of the almost unanimous opinion of both the Canadian Legislatures mobilised against the Government, he put his finger on the real point of danger. He said the only solution to that state of affairs was to make the Legislatures

responsible for their own actions. It was a very wise course of action. If we need an outward and visible illustration of Lord Durham's wisdom it is found in the fact that one of the greatest Canadian leaders of to-day, Mr. Mackenzie King, is the grandson of the Mackenzie who led the rebellion in Upper Canada a century ago.

So also, I believe, in India. I do not take the view that, while irresponsibility is bad for men and women of British stock, it is good for men and women of Asiatic stock. I believe that, unless we introduce this element of real responsibility, both into the Central Government and into the Provincial Governments, we shall see the state of affairs going from bad to worse, we shall see these assemblies not becoming easier to deal with in the future than they have been in the past, but immensely more hostile, with a growing body of hostility from one end of the country to the other.

The fact is that irresponsibility is to most people the outward sign of inequality of status. We in Great Britain pay very little attention to questions of status. Our position has been so fully assured in the world for many generations that we have no need to bother at all about questions of status. Not so the other countries of the world. Not so Germany in Europe to-day, not so Japan in Asia, not so our Indian fellow subjects who, looking back over centuries of civilisation, feel as sensitive as any of the great peoples of the world to any charge of inequality of status. A move forward, therefore, on the road to responsible government is something much more to them than a mere political reform. It is the outward and visible sign of the recognition of their status.

Why, then, do we not make this clearer in the Bill? Why in particular do we not state it in a Preamble to the Bill? I will tell the House why, and tell them in words which have behind them the considered judgment and the full weight of a Government statement.

The House will observe that the Bill, like most modern Bills, contains no Preamble. There have, it is true, been important Acts in the past, among them the Government of India Act, 1919, to which a statement of policy and intentions was prefixed. There is, however, no need for a Preamble in this case as no new pronouncement of policy or intentions is required. The Preamble to the Act of 1919 was described by the Joint Committee in their Report as having

“set out finally and definitely the ultimate aims of British rule in India.”



The Committee, after full consideration, further asserted that

“subsequent statements of policy have added nothing to the substance of this declaration,”

which they then proceed to quote in full in their Report as, in their own words,

“settling once and for all the attitude of the British Parliament and people towards the political aspirations ”

of India. If the Committee were justified in their statements—and the Government consider that they were fully justified—there is surely nothing to be gained by reiterating words which have settled once and for all the attitude of Parliament to the Indian problem. Moreover, in government, and above all in the government of the Indian Empire, continuity of policy is of the first importance. No Government and no Parliament can treat lightly any statement issued under the authority of their predecessors. But, once the aim of a policy has been clearly determined and accepted, significance attaches not to its reiteration but to the concrete measures taken in pursuance of it. The position of the Government, therefore, is this: They stand firmly by the pledge contained in the 1919 Preamble, which it is not part of their plan to repeal, and by the interpretation put by the Viceroy in 1929, on the authority of the Government of the day, on that Preamble that:

“The natural issue of India’s progress as there contemplated, is the attainment of Dominion status.”

The declaration of 1929 was made to remove doubts which had been felt as to the meaning of the Preamble of 1919. There is, therefore, no need to enshrine in an Act words and phrases which would add nothing new to the declaration of the Preamble. In saying that we stand by our pledges I include, of course, not only pledges given to British India, and to Burma as part of British India, but also our engagements with the Indian States.

Rightly understood, the Preamble of 1919, which I repeat will stand unrepealed, is a clear statement of the purpose of the British people, and this Bill is a definite step, indeed a great stride, forward towards the achievement of that purpose. It is by acts and not by words that we claim to be judged. It is clear that we can only reach the end we have plainly set before ourselves when India has succeeded in establishing the conditions upon which self-government rests, nor will its attainment be delayed by any reluctance on our part to recognise these conditions when they actually exist.

There are difficulties which she has to surmount, but they are difficulties inherent in the Indian problem and not of our creation. If I indicate by way of example two of them, it is not, therefore, through any desire to magnify them but because it is useless in matters of this kind to refuse to face facts or to assume that, if facts are avoided, they will dissolve. The first and most conspicuous problem which India has to solve is her cleavages of race, caste and religion. Again, until India can safely assume in much larger degree the responsibility for her own effective defence an Indian Government cannot be in the full sense of the word autonomous. These are examples of conditions which cannot be removed or altered by any provisions in any Act of Parliament or by any action on our part alone. Our policy, as will be seen from this Bill and the Instructions as to the manner in which these provisions which will accompany it are to be applied, is to do all that we can by sympathetic help and co-operation to enable India to overcome these difficulties and ultimately to take her place among the fully self-governing members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. It was in this spirit that we took upon ourselves the formidable burden and responsibility of removing one of the chief obstacles to further advance by providing a *modus vivendi* in regard to the removal of communal differences. Our desire is to lend our help in the spirit of partnership in a great enterprise which may enlist the best services which this country and India may have it in their power to give.

In Burke's well-known words :

“ Plain good intentions are of no mean force in the government of mankind.”

I have stated the intentions of the Government—plain, good intentions. They were the intentions of the Committee. They are, I believe, the intentions of the great majority of this House. If there are still those who impugn our motives, if there are still those who doubt our word, we are ready to be judged by our actions. And of our actions this Bill is the outward and visible sign—a Bill that has been hammered out in the face of almost overwhelming difficulties, a Bill that is the result of years of incessant inquiry, a Bill that offers to India a vast and fruitful field of self-government, a Bill that holds the balance fairly and honourably between conflicting interests and competing parties, a Bill that comes in the direct line of succession to the great Imperial measures of the past. Let Indians, though they may wish for a longer and a swifter advance, mark the spirit in which we make these proposals. Let

Parliament, realising the difficulties in any course of action, remembering the complexities of any scheme of Indian reform, admitting the many imperfections of any proposals, show by the majority for the Second Reading and its attitude in the subsequent stages of our discussions, that it intends to act, as it has acted upon great issues of the kind in the past, with resolution and expedition no less than with caution and wisdom.

17. SPEECH DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS  
ON THE 4TH JUNE, 1935, ON THE MOTION FOR THE  
THIRD READING OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
BILL.

I beg to move, "That the Bill be now read the Third time."

A further stage has been reached in the long trail across the Continent of Indian problems. The journey began seven and a-half years ago, when Parliament first started the Statutory Commission upon its course. Since that time there has been no halt or remission in our labours. Twenty-five thousand pages of reports, 4,000 pages of the OFFICIAL REPORT, 600 speeches of my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State and myself, 15,500,000 words publicly spoken, written, and reported, a volume of words, in fact, 20 times as great as the whole of the Authorised Version of the Bible, bear witness to the toil and trouble that are behind to-day's Debate. I am inclined to suggest to my right hon. Friend the Postmaster-General that these astronomic figures would make a very good poster for the National Government.

Let me take this opportunity of thanking the official Opposition and my right hon. and hon. Friends on my right who have disagreed with me, for the admirable patience which they have displayed in these protracted discussions. Let me especially congratulate the whole House upon having passed through the Committee and Report stages a Bill of 470 Clauses, filled from start to finish with intricate details and controversial subjects, without closure, guillotine, or single late sitting, but none the less having adequately discussed, I believe, every issue that is contained within the four corners of the Bill. I hope that our Indian friends will note the devotion of the Imperial Parliament to Indian affairs, and will note in particular the self-sacrifice of many British public men of all parties who, following the example of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and his colleagues seven and a-half years ago, have sacrificed their private avocations, their convenience, and their time to the Herculean task of building a Constitution for India.

In the course of these long months we have had our alarums and excursions. We have had our anxieties and our excitements. As the months revolved we have had more than one mare's nesting season, and with these seasons I will confess

to the House that more than once when I have seen these periods of incubation drawing near, I have been tempted to be anxious or perturbed, but I have comforted myself with the memory of an incident that took place in the ancestral home of my right hon. Friend the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill), concerning one of his distinguished relatives. It was recounted to me by the late Lord Curzon. The Duke of Marlborough—I think it was the uncle of my right hon. Friend—had an emu given to him. It was sent to Blenheim, and great interest was taken in the chances of its capacity for procreation. Eventually it laid an egg. The Duke and Duchess were absent from home. A telegram was sent to the latter by the agent to apprise her of the event. This was the telegram: “Emu has laid egg. In the absence of your Grace, have put goose to sit on it.” I know not what was the result of that incubation, but so far as the other incubations are concerned, I can say that they had so little effect upon the supporters of the Government that, with one single exception, and that a division during the dinner hour, when we had a majority of over 80, the Government’s majorities have never sunk below four to one. How fortunate I have been as compared with my predecessors in the Government is shown by the diary of John Evelyn, who, at a very critical division on which the whole future of the East India Company depended, found that all the supporters of the Government had gone to Downing Street—then, I suppose, a centre of amusement—to see a tiger baited by a number of British bulldogs. I am glad to say I have been more fortunate, and never once on any of the issues raised in this long discussion have our majorities sunk below a very large figure.

The significant fact that emerges from all these long discussions is that the three main principles of the Joint Select Committee’s Report—All-India Federation, Provincial autonomy, and responsibility with safeguards—remain intact and unaltered. No new principle has been introduced into the Bill. The changes that have been made are changes made to clarify the intentions of Parliament and to remove legitimate doubts and anxieties that still existed. This being so, I am glad to think that I need not once again state in detail the case which I have so often stated before and defend, provision by provision, the proposals of the Bill. Rather will I take the opportunity to deal with what I believe to be the two most formidable criticisms that have been made against the Measure. During the course of our discussions we have heard these propositions stated, time after time, by the two oppositions:

No one in India wants your Bill, and no one in India is going to work it. Let me devote myself to these two propositions in direct relation to the Amendments on the Order Paper : the Amendment, first, of the official Opposition, and, secondly, the Amendment—I would almost call it an epitome of the Commination Service—that stands in the name of my right hon. Friend the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill) and his friends.

It is a formidable criticism that no one in India wants the Bill and that no one in India is going to work the Bill, and the House is entitled, in this last of our Debates, to a categorical answer from the Government to this criticism. I have never under-rated the strength or the extent of the Indian criticism of the Bill. Indeed, if I were not a politician, if I had not fought eight Parliamentary elections, and if I had not been 25 years in this House, I would have been tempted to be overwhelmed by this spate of criticism in India. But, being a politician, believing that politics makes all the world kin, in the east and in the west, and that Indian politicians on that account are not very different from British politicians, I wondered to myself whether British politicians in the position in which Indian politicians find themselves to-day would not have behaved in exactly the same way. Indeed, we see Indian public men who, for a generation past, made as their platform full self-government for their country; a scheme is introduced, and though many of them agreed with it in principle, and not a few agreed with almost the letter of it, they none the less see it as a scheme that sets limitations upon the full measure of Indian self-government; what more natural then than that every public platform in India should resound with political criticisms of such a limiting scheme. After all, no Indian politician could possibly lose by asking for more. It might have appeared probable to many Indian politicians that the greater the agitation in India the more likely they were to obtain more—the more certain, in any case, were they likely to prevent any further extension of the limiting provisions. That being so, looking at the situation as one politician looking at the situation of other politicians, I have not been unduly depressed.

I am reminded of an experience in Lord Cromer's administration in Egypt. Very extreme demands were being made for the total evacuation of Egypt by the British. A petition to that end was given to Lord Cromer. He was surprised to find among the signatories an old Arab sheikh who was known to be one of our best friends in the country. He asked the sheikh what was

the reason for his support of this extreme movement. The sheikh smiled and answered, "It is all empty words. I often say to my camel or my horse, if in some trifling way he tries my patience, 'Curses on you. May Allah strike you dead, O son of a pig.' If I thought it would really happen I should be silent; but I know that the beast will remain unharmed." May there not be something of the attitude of the sheikh in this wave of furious criticism that we see raging in India from one end to another? I must carry the argument further and I must ask the critics, both here and in India, these two questions. What practical alternative have they to offer to this scheme? The other question is: What do they intend, if they have no such alternative? Do they accept the position that there should be no legislation at all? Let me deal with both those questions and begin with the question: Who has any practicable alternative to these proposals? The Amendment of the Opposition deals in some detail with their attitude to this question, but I note in particular that it abandons one proposition which hitherto many Members of the Opposition have kept in the forefront of these discussions. We have heard, time and again, from the Opposition of the Left that the only way to build up an Indian Constitution for India is to let Indians settle their Constitution for themselves. I am not surprised that this proposition has passed from the Labour proposals, for I am quite sure it is no alternative whatever to the Government proposals. I am as certain as I am of anything that, in the unlikely event of a constituent assembly being gathered together in India, within no reasonable period of time would an agreed solution result from those deliberations. I congratulate the Opposition, therefore, on having dropped that proposition.

I note, however, that they concentrate their criticisms upon a number of other points. They begin by condemning the Government for not making clearer in the Bill the progress towards Dominion Status. They go on to criticise the restrictions which are being placed on the exercise of Indian self-government. They proceed to state that a sufficient number of men and women are not being given the vote under the franchise proposals. Lastly, they state that the Government's proposals entrench in the Legislatures privilege, wealth and reaction. As to Dominion Status, I made the position of the Government abundantly clear in the Second Reading Debate, and I have nothing to add to what I then said. A wide road has been opened for Indians. It depends principally on their success as to how and when they reach their journey's

end. As to the restrictions, I maintain that they are inherent in any scheme of responsibility with safeguards and that they are required just as much by Indian as by British interests. As to the franchise, we are giving as wide a franchise to men and women and upon as broad a basis as the machinery of government will stand. As to the charge that we are entrenching the forces of reaction in the Government of India, let it be remembered that we are giving the Depressed Classes, for the first time, an established part in the government of their country, and making it possible for the agricultural workers to make their voices heard and their influence felt for the first time. If Indian consent is to be the test upon which stand or fall constitutional proposals the propositions of the Opposition of the Left, even if they were all included in the Government's Bill—even if the Government accepted their Amendment to-day—would be just as unacceptable to the Indians who are demanding full swaraj as the Government's Bill itself.

I pass from the criticisms of the Left to the criticisms of the Right. I noted with surprise, during our protracted Committee discussions, that my right hon. Friend the Member for Epping and others on the Right have come out in this House as the protagonists of self-determination. Being a Conservative, I have never accepted the undiluted essence of that kind of proposition. Time after time my right hon. and hon. Friends have declared that we should drop the Bill unless it was approved by the Assembly and approved by the Provincial Legislatures, that we had no right to proceed with a Bill which had not behind it expressed Indian support. My right hon. Friend says "Rubbish!" I do not think that is a very polite observation to make. I could easily substantiate what I have said if I were to take up the time of the House. Passing from my right hon. Friend's interjection, let me ask him and his friends two questions. First, if they claim that Indian consent must be the basis of any constitutional scheme, have they any scheme that is likely to obtain more Indian assent than the Government's scheme? Is it likely that their own scheme, if scheme it can be called, of Provincial autonomy, without the transfer of law and order in the Provinces, is going to obtain the assent of any body of public men in India, of any community? If that be the case, what is their course of action? They cannot criticise the Government for going on with a scheme that has not Indian assent behind it when admittedly, if they went on with their own scheme, it would have no support behind it at all. If that be the case, are they prepared to drop



constitutional reform altogether? I hope that my hon. and gallant Friend opposite, when he takes part in the Debate this afternoon, will deal with that question.

Suppose there is no assent to their scheme, or any other scheme, are they then prepared to have no legislation at all? The right hon. and gallant Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Colonel Wedgwood), in an interjection earlier in the afternoon, replied that what he would like to see was a continuance of the *status quo*. Will the House believe me when I say that a continuance of the *status quo* is impossible. Do not let any hon. or right hon. Member think that if this Bill were defeated or withdrawn we should be able to jog along as if nothing had happened. Two inevitable results would follow. In the first place, it would appear to every politically-minded Indian that the Mother of Parliaments had shown her impotence to deal with a great constitutional issue. The Indian people would see seven and a-half years of work ending in smoke. They would see the impotence of Parliament and, rightly or wrongly, would believe it to be due to the fact that we do not treat our pledges seriously and are not prepared to go on with Indian constitutional reform. That, I am certain, would be the first result supposing Parliament decided not to proceed with legislation.

The second result would be equally serious. The government of India, as I know to my cost after four years' connection with it, is no easy task. I say with all gravity to the House that if there were no legislation the problem of Indian government would be made tenfold more difficult. I am certain, looking back over these last four years, that we could not have seen the improvement that undoubtedly has taken place in the political atmosphere of India, if we had not had behind us a large body of Indian central opinion. Without that body of central opinion, I believe it would have been impossible for the Indian Central Legislature or for the Provincial Legislatures to have passed those drastic measures for the restoration of law and order. I believe that the Legislatures were ready to pass those measures, extreme though they were in many respects, because they genuinely believed that, while on the one hand we were prepared to restore law and order, on the other hand we were prepared boldly to proceed along the road of constitutional advance. I am certain that if my right hon. Friend and his friends had their way and there were no legislation, we should lose that body of support, and that we should be confronted with an almost solid opposition from one end of India to another

That is a prospect which I hope no hon. Member can contemplate with equanimity. I hope that no hon. Member who is connected with trade or business will contemplate that with equanimity.

During these four years we have seen the economic boycott and civil disobedience brought to an end without bloodshed or commotion. I am certain that we could not have achieved that result if, side by side with restoring law and order, we had not been steadily advancing upon the road of constitutional reform. I hope that I have said enough to the House to show that there is no practicable alternative to the proposals of the Government; that it is no alternative to suggest that there must be behind any Parliamentary Act the express opinion of the Indian public, and, thirdly, that it is no alternative to suggest that we could maintain the *status quo*, stay our legislative hand, wash away the work of 7½ years and continue with the government of India as it is to-day.

I do not take a depressed view about the Indian future. I believe that the Constitution enshrined in the Bill is workable, and will be worked. I see every sign in India of non-cooperation diminishing and of more and more desire, not by any means confined to the more conservative bodies of opinion in India, expressed to work the Bill. With common sense on both sides, I believe the Bill can be worked, and worked successfully. I see no reason to assume that common sense on both sides will not be forthcoming. During the last 15 years, India has passed through a very difficult period of constitutional development. The Montagu-Chelmsford reforms were not easy to work and gave ample opportunity for difficulty and bitterness on all sides. Yet a large measure of common sense has been forthcoming. Indian public men have, on the whole, worked the reforms loyally and sensibly. The great Services in India have shown a wide measure of sympathy and common sense in adapting their attitude to the new situation. With that experience behind us, I see no reason why we should not assume that common sense will be equally forthcoming when the Bill passes to the Statute Book.

Up to this point I have argued my case upon mere negative lines. I have argued it upon the ground that no one has suggested a practicable alternative and upon the ground that it is no alternative to suggest that we should not legislate at all. I should not like to leave the case based simply upon those negative arguments. I support the Bill to-day upon its merits. I believe it enshrines within its four corners a majestic conception of government that is in the fullest harmony with the best

traditions of the British Commonwealth of Nations. In our long Committee discussions we were perhaps apt to think too lightly of the human elements behind the constitutional phrases that we were discussing. We were apt, maybe, to think of the process as a process of constitutional history rather than as a process of human development. "Provincial Autonomy"—a terrible phrase, a dull sentence that looks as if it came out of a treatise upon constitutional history. Let the House think to-day however what is behind it. Let hon. Members think of the great conception of those huge territories, kingdoms rather than Provinces, developing their own life upon their own distinctive lines

So again with "All-India Federation." When we get behind the phrase, should not All-India Federation fire our imagination? Is it not a great conception to attempt to achieve for India an organic unity that she has never possessed before? Is it not a great conception to attempt to achieve for India a system of government which will combine within it the experiences and institutions of the West and the experiences and the institutions of the Indian States in the East? May it not be that with British help and British advice this system of government, if it can be successfully brought into operation, may prove a bridge between Asia and Europe? The horizon in Asia is none too clear. There are many threatening clouds upon it. What better task for this House than to attempt to set up a system of government that combines within it the Eastern and the Western conception? If we can achieve this end we shall have shown to the world a great experiment in internationalism in its truest and best sense. For the first time we shall have shown to the world that it is possible for an Empire to continue and to prosper with the Mother Country here in Europe, and the greatest, and perhaps the strongest, of the members of the Commonwealth of Nations 6,000 miles away in the East. We shall have shown to the world, further, that we have succeeded in a time of doubt, crisis and difficulty in setting up in Asia a great territory of indigenous peace, liberty and justice. That is a great conception. It is a conception worthy of the support of every hon. Member in this House

I have addressed the House many times on these Indian issues. I fear that, in the nature of things, I have often been controversial. I have usually been dealing with points of difference rather than with points of agreement. May I—and these are my last words to-day—make this appeal to hon. Members here and to our friends in India? It looks as if this

Bill will pass into law. If it passes into law, I see no reason why it should not be brought into operation without undue delay. That being the case, may I appeal to hon. Members on all sides of the House, and to our friends in India, to help us to bring the Bill into operation in the best possible atmosphere? I do not suggest that any one of them should retract any criticism he has made. I do not suggest that any one of them should cease to feel that the Government have made a mistake, that the Secretary of State, in particular, has pledged himself to many foolish proposals. I do not suggest that any one of them should admit for a moment that he has been wrong in the criticisms he has made. None the less, I do appeal to hon. Members, now that the Bill is going to pass to the Statute Book; I do appeal to Indians, now that they see their Constitution being actually set up, to take the opportunities of service to India that are offered to Indians in India; I appeal to the British in India to take the opportunities that are offered to the British in India and that are offered to the British here, and to see that there is a period of political calm in India in which the Bill can be brought into operation with the best possible hope of success. With these words, I beg to move the Third Reading of the Bill, and I hope that my hon. Friends both here and in India will not forget my last appeal.

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